

2012 to 2015 Eckhart Tolle TV Part 4

[Speaker 5] (0:00 - 3:32)

what an apple really tastes like. That's sad. So, but they have to fill themselves with something.

They are dying for that sweetness, so they grab that sugar, that chocolate bar, the candy, anything. They're filling themselves up. And they don't know what they're really, what the body is really calling for is something living, organic, fresh.

So whether or not we are meant to eat meat, I don't know. Only you can know, and don't judge another. It's going to be different for everyone.

Eckhart eats everything. He'll eat meat sometimes, rarely, but he'll eat, you know, mainly if he does eat meat, it's chicken. I, on the other hand, will really not, once in a blue moon will eat meat, but mainly I eat a lot of just vegan food.

Fish, occasionally. But that's this makeup here. And Eckhart has his makeup.

He comes from Europe. Where there is a lot of meat eating over there. So only you can really know for yourself in the moment.

And even if you are a vegetarian, are you only a vegetarian because your mind is telling you it's better to be one? Maybe that once in a while, if you're in touch with your body, you do need that fish, or you do need that meat. Go within and find out what is it that my body wants.

You're looking at a menu. Oh, what do I want today? You know, you're going through all the menu and sometimes you just got to, okay, I just got to tap within and see what my body needs right now.

So being a vegetarian and being spiritual are not necessarily hand in hand. You don't really necessarily go together. Because if you think, well, I'm spiritual because I'm a vegetarian.

They're eating meat. There's something wrong with them. They're not very spiritual.

That's an idea, a thought. All thoughts are not the truth. And we get fooled by them all the time, believing in them, thinking that it's truth when it's not.

Not one thought is the truth.

[Speaker 1] (3:35 - 32:49)

Good to be here in this moment. If you're not fully here yet, I invite you to enter the

present moment with your attention instead of being absorbed in your thinking. And that simple thing is a shift in consciousness.

How do I enter the present moment somebody is thinking right now? I can't get out of my head. An easy way is to direct your attention to sense perceptions, whatever you see and hear at this moment and become a little bit more alert and go, oh, there's an alertness that arises and that heightens your sense perceptions, auditory, visual, and you suddenly become conscious of your surroundings.

And you might notice that one's usual state, well, not yours because you're all advanced spiritual practitioners, but other people's usual state is they're hardly here. They're only present enough not to bump into furniture. Whatever is happening around them is peripheral to their attention.

And a huge amount of their attention is continuously absorbed by thinking. And a lot of that is actually not terribly relevant to anything, but it pretends to be extremely important. Every thought has this seductive quality to it.

It wants to draw you in. It has a pull like a magnet. And if you follow each thought, it'll take you, you're at the mercy of whatever arises in your mind.

And you live like that. What a terrible existence. And you go drawn this way and that way.

And then after a few years, you can see it in your face. Your face becomes very tense. And there's no longer a light shining through your eyes.

Because all the consciousness is being devoured by the mind. And that's a dreadful state. It's been like this for a long, long time, many thousands of years.

And that really your entire sense of who you are, which is the most vital thing to know who you are. This is why the ancient dictum at the Oracle in Delphi says, know yourself. And one of the very important meditation recommended by, for example, Ramana Maharshi and other teachers is the question, who am I?

So your sense of who you are when you are completely identified with every thought that comes into your head, a lot of it negative, by the way, because negative thoughts are more seductive than positive thoughts. You can think about an unpleasant person who did something to you yesterday or said something, or failed to say something, or failed to do something, or should have done something. You can think about that for a long time, but you can't think that much about a beautiful sunset.

Okay. So all the things that make life worth living actually involve less thinking for joy to come into your life, a moment of joy. You go, ah.

And you might not realize that in that moment, there is a space that opens up inside you when you are not thinking, but not falling asleep either. There's just a space of alertness. And that is really already a glimpse that is what in Zen they call Satori, which is a flash of enlightenment, a flash, a momentary realization.

Beauty, to recognize beauty anywhere, for a moment, the thinking mind needs to subside and a little bit of space opens up and you go and then you truly look. And you might not notice it, but for a few seconds, you're not thinking. If you're thinking, you're not really seeing.

You can say, oh, that's a lovely flower. I wish I had that in my garden, but you're not really seeing it. To really see it, there needs to be a moment of alert presence in which thinking subsides.

Oh, there it is. And that's how beauty reveals itself to you. And that's how joy arises.

And that's how any feeling that is empathy with another human being, you cannot arrive at empathy or compassion through the judgmental mind. There needs to be a space within you that opens up and you can look at another human being without any conceptualization in your head. You look at them and you sense something in them that is deeper than their psychological makeup.

But there is a presence. It can only be realized through the presence within you. So that is the dimension within you without which your life, you're not really truly alive.

Or as Confucius would say, you're not fully human yet. If that dimension has not yet arisen in you, has not revealed itself to you, you are just on your way, yes, of course, you are on your way. Everybody's on their way to becoming fully human, but you're not that, not quite there yet.

And some people are so deeply trapped in their minds that they live in a total, completely conceptualized universe where every human they meet, they immediately judge. And they take entire groups of humans and judge them. And so they dehumanize them.

And this is how violence can happen. Total loss of empathy. You no longer know what you're doing.

You no longer know what you're doing to other humans. We all know from recent events last week, people asked, how is it possible that humans can perpetrate such atrocities? Well, they are possessed by certain thoughts in your head.

They have taken over their minds. They're called religious thoughts. Nothing to do with anything.

It's not, it's not true religion. It's an ideology. It is a viral infection, so to speak, of your mind.

Thoughts can act like viruses. If you're not careful, they can take over completely. So a few groups of thoughts possess your entire mind and control everything.

Everything is seen through that viral infection in your mind, to use that analogy. And it's an amazing thing. So these are extreme ways, but millions are suffering from that, not perhaps as an extreme way as the terrorists, but millions are experiencing symptoms of that kind, lesser symptoms of the same disease.

So to know yourself, for most people, means it's an identification with certain images in their mind. First of all, there's the image, I am this physical body. And then, what is it that people derive their sense of identity from, the sense of who they are?

Usually it's with their physical appearance, and then the inner world of their thoughts, accompanied by emotions. And lots of emotions are, lots of very heavy emotions are created by dysfunctional thinking. We all know that.

And in the past, before you were spiritually awakened, you experienced that also. So there is a vast dimension in yourself that isn't, now, let's call it the transcendent dimension of who you are. There, where the person or the personality that you usually identify with, that usually gives you your sense of self, which consists of self-talk, basically.

The habitual self-talk in the head explains to you who you are. And it takes on board what others tell you who you are. It starts with what your mother might have told you who you are, and your siblings, and parents, and your environment, and your culture tells you who you are.

And this is absorbed by the mind, and then it becomes your story. And then that becomes a foundation for your sense of identity. This is where you derive your sense of self from.

So it's a conceptualized, because thoughts are concepts, a conceptualized sense of self. It's not, and then it attempts to make itself feel a little better by adding more concepts to their mind. There might be possessions.

Maybe if I get further more possessions, I can feel better about myself. Maybe if I find the right person who is going to make me happy, then my life will be fine. But these are all really concepts.

Even the big house or the big car gets translated into a concept in your mind, and then you identify with it, and it becomes part of the sense of me. But always uneasy and never enough, and never satisfied for very long, and always things seem to go wrong.

The Buddha already recognized that.

He said, wherever you go and whatever you do, you'll find dukkha, which is translated traditionally as suffering, but can also be translated as misery or unhappiness or unsatisfactoriness. So on that level, you can never be satisfied for very long. If you don't know who you are, but you're trying to enhance that mind-made sense of self.

So the most important dimension, one could say you only know one half of yourself, and that half is who you are on the level of form, physical form and the psychological form of me. And that's how most people live their lives, and they don't know what they are missing. Now, spiritual people have the idea that there is such a thing as a state of enlightenment that can be reached at some point.

Many Buddhists believe that a few more incarnations are definitely needed, but then perhaps I will eventually get there. So it is made into some idea in the head that I need to reach and not realizing that that dimension, which we could call the spiritual dimension, which we could call the transcendent dimension, or which we could call who you really are, that is always already there. That is already present here and now.

And why do some people not know it? Because they are continuously completely overlooking it. Because the movement of thought plus the emotions that go with it has an enormous seductive quality that it hypnotizes you into continuously identifying with form that arises.

And every thought is a thought form, and every emotion that arises is an emotional, it's not a physical form, but it's an energy formation. Every thought is an energy formation, every emotion is an energy formation. You cannot see it, but you can feel it, and it has certain, it affects the body in certain ways.

So those things continuously absorb your attention, and there's something very vital that you overlook, and that is something deeper without which you couldn't even think. There would be no thought, there would be no sense perception. So what you then overlook is the presence, the formless presence of consciousness itself, which is always there.

If you stop thinking for three seconds, there it is. Where? Because if you look for it as if you could say, there it is, you'll never find it.

So if you look for enlightenment as if it could be something that arises, and you can say, ah, there it is, and now I have it, then you will never find it, because you would, it's not, that's not how you, you cannot grasp it. Can you, now let's bring this to what really matters right now. Can you sense that apart from any thoughts that may be going through your head right now, hopefully not many, maybe none, there is also in you the dimension of simple, formless presence.

To get you there, I could ask you the question, what does it really feel like to be you right

now? What is that feeling of, what does it, what is it sense, what does it feel like to be you? Now, when I say you, I don't mean your personal history, you don't have to remember that for this practice.

What does it, something deeper that has never left you, that has always been there and always will be there, what does it feel like? Can you sense the presence that you are, that has nothing to do with your personal history at all? There is simply the light of presence.

And meditation, of course, is supposed to get you there, but you can, at any moment, you can be aware of it. How? Not by making it an object of your attention that doesn't work, because that awareness or that consciousness that is the essence of who you are, when you're looking for it and you go, okay, I'm looking for that great experience, the alertness behind the looking is it.

So if you're looking, if you're looking for yourself, if you're looking for the enlightened version of yourself in some future moment, you are missing that the very consciousness that becomes the looking, if you could catch it at a slightly earlier stage, where it's just pure consciousness, is it already. So if you can know yourself as consciousness, as the presence, then you realize the hidden dimension of life, or the transcendent dimension. I sometimes call that the other half.

It's not only a way of speaking, it's you can't divide life into two halves. But temporarily, just to help us approach this, see for a moment that your life consists of the life of form, physical form, mental form, but also of inner presence. In the same way, if you could, I could use an analogy of this room, if you wanted to investigate what is the essence of this room here, and you start looking at the people in it, let's maybe in this analogy, the people are the thoughts in your mind.

And then you're looking at the furniture and the walls, and the ceiling and everything. Okay, okay, I'm trying to get to the essence of this room. And then you can you can even analyze with microscopes.

Maybe it's hidden in the carpet, but maybe it's maybe with a telescope, maybe if I click my binoculars, maybe it's on that wall somewhere. And you miss the one thing that is pervades the entire room, which is the space of this room. So if you could pay attention to the space of this room, you would get the essence.

Without the space, the room means nothing. If we're using an analogy here, that there is a spaciousness within you, that is continuously missed, because you're so interested in the furniture in your head. And for many people, their mind is crammed full with furniture.

You can't even move anymore. And here comes another thought, and then here comes

this. No space.

And the loss of spaciousness is the most terrible loss in life, because then joy, real joy cannot arise anymore. Love, which is a sense of connect, true connectedness with another, that all arises from a little bit of spaciousness inside you. Sometimes people become spacious for three seconds when they see a dog.

That's why I have this book about dogs and cats. You see a dog, and you look into the eyes of a dog, and you go, ah, it feels good. People love dogs, except people who don't.

But most people seem to love dogs. And they are drawn to them because for a moment, it frees you from your mind, because you know that the dog has no judgments about you. It doesn't, it is not that good.

It just looks at you and the tail wags. And for a moment, it can free you of your mind for a few seconds. And that's why it feels so good to look at the dog and say, oh, lovely dog.

And for a moment, there's just a connectedness. With humans, much more difficult, because the moment you meet another human, there's judgments, and you can sense that, except those humans who are no longer dominated by their mind, and they can meet you in that openness of presence. And they just look, and you know they're not judging you.

But this means those humans who don't judge you, they haven't fallen back to the level of consciousness of the dog. The dog, in a way, is in that beautiful state of connectedness with being, because the dog has not yet been totally seduced by thinking. But for us, we cannot go back.

We have to go forward. We have to rise above thinking, not fall below thinking. So here, the arising of presence is an evolutionary leap that humanity is now, we are beginning to enter this evolutionary shift where humans reach a new stage in evolution, which is a complete inner change where thinking still operates.

It's transcended, which means it isn't left behind completely. It is transcended so that you are no longer a thought-based entity, you are a presence-based entity. So you're no longer dominated by thought, and it's only then that your thinking can actually be used in a powerful and constructive way.

It's a wonderful tool to use your mind positively, to create. It's an miraculous instrument. It only becomes insane when it takes you over, and there's no space of awareness anymore.

So if you then derive your sense of identity from the presence within you, and more and more you become comfortable with spaces of not thinking, oh, you can walk from one building to another, or from the building to your car, and just be in that state of alert

presence. It's beautiful. You see beauty everywhere.

You don't need to label everything anymore. That compulsion to label everything is the egoic mind. It doesn't operate anymore, and that's an enormous burden that falls away when you can go through not...

You don't need to judge everything. There is a deeper knowing there that is not conceptual. So one of the great spiritual practices is a very simple one, and that is practice not labeling or interpreting what you are perceiving.

And that you can practice anywhere, wherever you are. I always recommend do it when you're waiting for something somewhere, because you'll be amazed how much time we spend waiting for things. Waiting at the traffic light, waiting at the checkout counter, waiting at the airport, waiting, waiting, waiting.

Many people are waiting their entire life because they're waiting to start living, and then they reach 70, and they say, was that it? I'm still waiting. I haven't started living yet.

Awful. So use waiting. Instead of waiting, just bring an alertness.

Enter that state of... Invite that state of alertness in, and you go, oh. Why?

There's nothing wrong with waiting, because you always either stand, sit, or lie somewhere. Does it really matter where you stand, sit, or lie? But the mind says, I shouldn't be waiting at this checkout counter.

Why is this person so inefficient? Why is he talking to me? Why is he talking to this girl?

She shouldn't be talking to him. She should be doing her job. And you can discover that in yourself, and suddenly say, I choose something different.

The discovery of your mind, what your mind is doing to you, is an enormous step forward in evolutionary terms. The discovery of how your mind functions... Oh, I thought they'd shut me off.

They will in a minute. It implies that it's already that awareness arising in you, where you become aware of what your mind is doing. It's an enormous thing.

So the shift, then, you can use waiting periods instead of complaining, just being present. Enter the... Feel the presence that you are, the alertness.

And at that moment, you become a spiritual master, because all you have to do is wait. All that differentiates a person who is not yet awake from a spiritual master is that the spiritual master can be in the state of presence, which is complete alignment with the present moment without complaining about anything. Just is.

That's the Zen master. He goes, this is what is. What are you complaining about?

And this is why there was a Zen master who would never answer any questions. All he would ever do when people asked him questions about the meaning of Zen was, he would raise his finger and look at you. Can you explain the meaning of Zen, please?

Did you hear what I said? Did you hear my question? He's simply teaching presence, alert presence.

That's Zen, nothing else. And these people spend years in Zen monasteries and they still don't get it. Because they think, I need to understand something.

The Course in Miracles says, your understanding is not a powerful contribution to the truth. Now, the miracle is when you give up the need to understand yourself, my life, I need to figure out my life. What is your life?

It's a mental construct. So you're trying to figure out a mental construct that you call my life, and it's very complex. I need to figure out what it's all about.

Where am I going? What am I doing? Why not give up the need to understand and just invite presence in?

And then it looks for a moment from the point of view of the mind as if you didn't know anything anymore. And you don't, not conceptually. So you voluntarily enter that state of not knowing, and then you realize out of that state of not knowing, a deeper knowing arises, and a deeper sense of connectedness with life, and a deeper sense of connectedness with other humans and all life forms.

And that is the awakening of the shift in consciousness. And now I'm handing this chair over to Deepak.

[Speaker 3] (33:23 - 1:07:17)

So, right this moment as you're about to listen to me, just turn your attention to who's listening. So as you're looking at me, turn your attention to who's looking. That's you.

Okay. That you has always existed. It was there when you were a baby.

It was there, a different body, different mind. It was there when you were a teenager. Different body, different mind.

It's there now. And actually if you stay with it without anyone explaining to you, you'll realize that it's that timeless being in which time is born. Time is just the movement of thought.

Time is the movement of thought that creates a subject-object split. Me, Deepak,

Eckhart. Okay, all of you.

That's a thought. That's a thought. And it is the movement of thought is not an observer in the midst of time-bound observation.

So as Eckhart said, you can spend your whole life studying scripture and spend your whole life in various practices. And it does help. It takes time for a fruit to ripen, but then one day it falls and the falling can be quite sudden, as in your case it was.

Transcendence is simply going beyond the subject-object split, which is artificial. It's not real. Nature and the universe is a single process.

So the subject-object split is an artificial split. And it is the cause of every single problem that we know. So I come from a tradition which is called Vedanta, which you referred to when you mentioned Sri Ramana Maharshi.

And Buddha came many years later and actually did refine in his own language the teachings of Vedanta. But in the Vedanta there are what I call the five kleshas. Klesha is a Sanskrit word which means the cause of suffering.

So the five kleshas are, number one, not knowing who you are. Number two, the addiction and the craving for permanence in a world that is inherently impermanent. Number three is the fear of impermanence.

Number four is identifying with your self-image instead of yourself. What Eckhart was saying, all the labels. So all the labels, all the definitions, all the evaluations, all the judgments, all the ideas, all the concepts that have come from conditioning, parents, your siblings, your culture, religion, history, economic conditions, all these things are collected and then identified with and that becomes the self-image.

The conditioned mind. So that's the fourth klesha. And the fifth klesha is the fear of death.

It's the fear of the unknown. The fear that actually is the basis of all religion, at least institutionalized religion, capitalizes on the fear of death. And in a way, all fears is the fear of death in disguise.

Because what is the fear of death? It's, as I said, the fear of the unknown, but it's also the fear of, I'm trying to hold on to something that's not going to be there in the next moment. Because in the real world, we do not have objects.

In the real world, objects do not exist. That's a perceptual artifact. There's only process.

Only process. A simple way of saying this is that there are no nouns, only verbs. The universe is a verb.

It's an activity. And being an activity, it never stops. Okay, so when even as you're looking at me or yourself, your body or your mind, your body is constantly changing.

Actually, even scientifically, the body that you have right now is not the body that you walked in with a little while ago. Because you're breathing, you're thinking, you're taking in information from the world, you have relationships, you eat, you eliminate. All these processes are constantly the flux of your physical body.

So, as I said, the body you walked in with is not the body that you have right now. And of course, in less than a year, every single atom in your body has been replaced, recycled. You don't have the same body you had as a kid, as a baby, as a teenager.

So if you think you're your body, you have a little bit of a dilemma. Which one are you talking about? And if you think you're your mind, you also have a dilemma because the mind is changing all the time.

And so here we go, bamboozled by the idea that things exist. Things don't exist. Only process exists.

Nouns are conventions of language. They're not facts of reality. It's a language convention.

There's no noun. Not even this microphone is not a noun. It has a little longer shelf life though than the body and the mind.

But there are no nouns. So all the suffering comes from nouns, things which don't exist. So we go over those five kleshas, not knowing who you are, trying to fix the flux, which won't be fixed, afraid of the flux, identifying with ideas instead of who you are, ideas about yourself, as you said, and the fear of death.

And the great teaching of the Vedanta is that all these five causes of suffering are contained in the first cause. And that is not knowing you, who you are. Confusing yourself with a socially induced hallucination that actually doesn't exist.

And the key therefore is, who am I? I mean, Sri Ramana Maharshi spent 20 years in silence and if people asked him a question, no matter what the question was, he would say, who's asking the question? And sometimes he would say, not only who's asking the question, but who is the who that is asking the question?

And you know, when you say, who am I? Then you could also ask yourself, who's asking, who am I? And if you go a little bit deeply into that, you'll come to the place that Eckhart was talking about, that who's asking the question is a transcendent being that is neither the subject of experience nor the object of experience.

So very frequently we say, I'm the observer, but even that is not correct. The observer

and the observed, me and the other, simultaneously co-arise as the movement of thought. The real you is neither the observer nor the observed, but in which both the observer, the subject and the object of experience, simultaneously arise and simultaneously subside.

And they're doing so in every moment. That's the flux. Okay, it's a flux that is constantly creating a subject and object.

But the real being is neither the subject or the object. It's where the subject and object arise like waves on the ocean and subside. So before a wave arises, it's water.

As a wave, it's water. And when it subsides, it's water. It doesn't lose its wateriness.

And that's being. You are the being in which thought arises and subsides. Now that thought can have many qualities.

These qualities of thought are referred to in the consciousness literature. They're referred to as qualia. Now everybody has heard these days, thanks partly to my obsession with quanta.

Okay, quanta. What is quanta? It means quantity.

Okay, so quantum physics is the study of quantities of units of mass and energy. It's the smallest indivisible unit of information and energy is a quanta. But remember quanta units of measurement.

Qualia, on the other hand, are units of thought or qualities of consciousness. And they're usually just four of them. Anytime you have any experience, anytime you have any experience, you're either experiencing a sensation somewhere, or you're experiencing an image, or a feeling, emotion, or a thought.

Now Dan Siegel, who's a great friend of ours, is a neuropsychiatrist at UCLA. He says he uses an acronym SIFT, S-I-F-T. Every experience that you have is either a sensation, or an image, or a feeling, or a thought.

All of perceptual experience, all of perceptual experience, all of cognitive experience, or any experience, is actually just consciousness and its qualities. Okay, so right now I'm experiencing you as image and sensation in my body, in my consciousness. I experience my own body like that.

I experience you like that. Sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts are occurrences in consciousness of consciousness. So even though I see this as mine, and your body is different than mine, actually what I'm experiencing as you, and what I'm experiencing as my body, are just sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts.

And the whole universe is nothing other than that. Consciousness experiencing itself as

the subject and the object, but both the subject, the individual subject, and the individual object, are movements of consciousness within consciousness. Okay, so that's why the great sayings of the great rishis, they say, I'm not in the world, the world is in me.

I'm not in the body, the body is in me. I'm not in the mind, the mind is in me. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna, when he's talking to Arjuna, he says, Curving back within myself, I create again and again.

It's the mechanics of how we create our experience of the body, we create our experience of the mind, and we create our experience of the world. If we totally understand that, and come back to what Eckhart was saying, that you can't find this presence by looking for it, because it's the one that's looking. Okay, you can't find consciousness by looking for it, because consciousness is the one that's looking.

You know, in my field as a person who's trained in neuroscience, biology, endocrinology, today there's a lot of interest in consciousness as a brain phenomenon, because that's how we are trained. We think consciousness is a perceptual object, but where is the brain experience? When you think about the brain, where is that experience?

In consciousness. When you look at a brain as a perceptual object, that's also in consciousness. The consciousness is prior to brain.

Even the experience of the brain is, the perceptual experience of the brain, is a qualia. It's a quality of consciousness within consciousness. So, coming back to what he was saying, is all this neuroscience that we're doing, which is fun, a lot of fun to do, it's very inferential, but we will never understand consciousness by looking at a brain, or through neuroscience.

Why? Because only consciousness can know consciousness. Only consciousness can understand consciousness.

Only consciousness can experience consciousness. Any neuroscience validation of consciousness is inferential. It's not direct.

Direct is the presence this moment. So, when I started, I said, as you're listening to me, turn your attention to who's listening, or as you're looking at me, just turn your attention to the space between you and me. Presence is always there.

It gets overshadowed, as Eckhart was saying, by the furniture. You know, Rumi has a very beautiful poem. He says, who am I in the middle of all this thought traffic?

Because there's the center of being in which all the traffic is happening. And we are obviously identifying ourselves with the furniture and the traffic, instead of this presence around which the traffic is being generated as a result of self-interaction. The internal dialogue is, Eckhart was saying, speaking to yourself.

And that never stops, because we're so influenced by the quality of awareness, which is always looking out there for, ultimately, what is called happiness or fulfillment. Okay, get the right job, I'll be happy. Get the right person, I'll be happy.

Get a lot of money, win the lottery, I'll be happy. Get good health, I'll be happy. But realize what Eckhart said earlier.

All that is thought. Okay, all that is thought. If I do this, so before the thought arises, you're already happy.

And after the thought subsides, you're exactly where you started from. Okay, before the thought arises, you were at peace. Then the thought arose, then you did everything to fulfill that outcome of that thought, which we call desire.

And at the end, you're back where you started from. Just like before the wave arises, it's the ocean, and after the wave subsides, it's back into the ocean. So that makes it very obvious that happiness or joy is the starting point.

It's also the ending point. Now what's that poem T.S. Eliot, we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of our exploring is to arrive where we started from. At the end of our exploring is to arrive where we started from and know the place for the first time.

So what Eckhart was saying is, you know, instead of searching, just actually go back to where you started from. It's a journey without distance. And when you realize that, that there's a journey without distance, you turn the quality of your awareness to being present.

Now it's very interesting, we can say this many times, and you know, you can hear this, and you can go out, and then you get distracted. You get distracted, and then something happens at some point where you realize that you don't need to be distracted. You can be the timeless being in the midst of time-bound activity.

You can be the hub around which the whole universe arises and subsides. Because the universe, by the way, is nothing but sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts within consciousness. So there's a very important Mahavakya.

Mahavakya means big idea, and it's still an idea till you experience it in Sanskrit. Aham Brahmasmi. Aham means I am.

Brahmasmi, the universe. Because that's the only identity we have. We are the totality of the universe, the totality of the universe, as the continuum of space-time events now.

But that space-time events, the continuum is just a flux. It's coming and going, coming and going. So we go back to the fifth klesha, the fear of death.

People say, where do I go when I die? Okay, let me ask you a question just now. What

did you have for lunch today?

What did you have for lunch? Salad? Where did you have lunch?

Now, as I'm asking you a question, the memory is coming, right? And you can experience it as a sensation, image, feeling, or thought, right? Where was that before I asked you the question?

Where was that experience before I asked you the question? Now, you know, traditional neuroscientists will say, it was in my brain, but I work with the best neuroscientists, my colleague, collaborators, Rudy Tanzi at Harvard, the chief neuroscientist and geneticist at Mass General Hospital. I said, Rudy, next time you have a conference, and you had 150 of the best scientists.

And I said, ask them, where is memory stored in a cellular level? Guess what? Not one of them could answer.

We know that when I asked you that question, and before you said salad, that there was a memory somewhere, but you can't find it in the brain. Can't find it in the brain. Do you remember the house you lived in when you were a teenager?

Can you see it now? So what are you seeing? You're experiencing sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, because those memories are associated with other memories.

If I go inside your brain, do you think I'll find a picture of your house? Or do you think there's some neural network where there is salad? So what happened?

When I asked you the question, a sensation, image, feeling, thought arose from consciousness, and then it subsided in consciousness. And that consciousness is transcendent. It doesn't exist in space-time.

So where do we go when we die? Where that salad was before I asked you the question. We don't go anywhere because we are there all the time.

Okay? In fact, every thought comes from there. Every memory comes from there.

Every desire comes from there. Every bit of imagination comes from there. Insights, intuition, imagination, creativity, choice, all comes from there.

And we have to be there in order to retrieve it. You retrieved it from your transcendent self. And being transcendent, it's not a space-time event.

But as you actualized it, then there was a little space-time. Okay? Ramana Maharshi, when he was dying, people said, we are going to miss you.

He said, but where am I going? Okay? What we call the physical world is a quality of

awareness within awareness.

What we call the mental world is a quality of awareness within awareness. What we call the universe is a quality of awareness within awareness. And if you can just anchor yourself in that little space, the openness that Eckhart was saying, it's your ticket to freedom.

It's the ticket to freedom. Why? Because it's the you that never dies.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, water cannot wet it. Wind cannot dry it. Weapons cannot shatter it.

Fire cannot burn it. It's eternal. It's unborn because birth is a space-time event.

It doesn't die because death is a space-time event. A space-time event is part of the flux. So I think that's all I really want to say.

Okay? Now, just one minute. You know, we do these retreats, we do these retreats because sometimes people haven't sat down or been quiet for a long time, and it's almost impossible for them to be present.

So the retreat helps in taking you there. In fact, I do retreats myself in silence. So about two years ago, I took the opportunity to go to a monastery in Thailand, in the north of Thailand, and we had a very interesting routine over there.

Okay, and the routine was that, first of all, we shaved our head and our eyebrows, and we were barefoot, and so it was, you know, everybody looked the same, and there was no social mask. Secondly, we had to go begging. It wasn't called begging, it was called the arms round to find our food every day, and then, you know, people were so generous that we came back as if we had gone shopping to Whole Foods.

And then we shared our meal, and one meal a day, and the rest of the time was spent in silence and observing impermanence, because, you know, you soon realize that everything you're looking at is this flux. It's impermanent, and it had a very dramatic effect on all of us because it threw us in the present moment in a very interesting way. And so, when we were leaving, and the abbot, the senior abbot, who was the head of the monasteries, about half my age, you know, and we were in silence most of the time, but, you know, in the evenings, we had like two hours where we could talk to him, and he would ask me questions about quantum physics, and I realized he knew everything.

There was nothing I couldn't tell him. He had never read a book, he'd never learned mathematics or anything, but he had the experience that it wasn't difficult to explain to him what I knew intellectually. And on the day we were leaving, we were all in his presence, and he had a very gracious presence, just like Eckhart has, and he left us with two things, and I want to leave you with those two things, okay?

The first is, and this is both scientific insight and real insight, okay? There are no boundaries in the universe. Every boundary is conceptual.

In reality, there are no boundaries. We create them, just like we create latitude and longitude for purposes of convenience. So if I say, you know, meet me on 56th and Broadway on Tuesday at 6 p.m., now we've created an agreement for a boundary, but in reality, there are no boundaries at all. And the second thing, which you already know, is the present moment is the only moment that never ends, okay? The situations and circumstances around the present moment will change, but the moment won't change, because it's timeless, it's transcendent, it's eternal. So I'll leave you with what my abbot said to me, he said, the most important time in your life is now, the most important person in your life is the one you're with now, the most important activity in your life is the one you're involved with now.

And if you do that, the unknown will become known to you. The unknown is actually known only in the present moment, and that ultimately will lead to the conquest of death, because death happens in time. Only that which is born dies, but that which is never born cannot die.

Okay, thank you. I'm going to invite Eckhart, please welcome. So by the way, thank you.

By the way, you know, in the spiritual literature and in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, they talk about supernormal powers, they're called siddhis. Have you heard the word siddhi? Siddhis are dormant potentials, the ability to see in the future, the ability to experience the past, know previous lifetimes, remote viewing, remote healing.

And I'm experiencing a siddhi right now, and it says that Wayne Dyer is in this room. There he is, and you thought I wasn't psychic. So I'm going to first have a conversation with Eckhart, and then perhaps you can join us for a few moments.

Okay, so Eckhart, these questions have come through Facebook, and I picked up the ones that have come most frequently.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:18 - 1:08:09)

Just before we were talking, you were in the Buddhist monastery in Thailand, and there's this Buddhist scripture that came to mind that is one of my favorite sutras. I don't remember what it's called. It's a famous sutra.

The Buddha is supposed to have said it, but of course you never know. It says, so the Buddha is speaking to the monks. So he says, there is, oh monks, the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested.

If there were not the unborn, the uncreated, and the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the created, and the manifested.

[Speaker 3] (1:08:11 - 1:08:34)

The idea of freedom is an idea. Beautiful. So I actually think I know the answer to this, but this is for you.

It says, can you describe your daily spiritual practices? Have they changed over the years?

[Speaker 1] (1:08:37 - 1:10:18)

Well, I don't, as you probably know, I don't have a practice as such, not a formal practice as a separate activity from ordinary daily living. But what naturally arises a lot of the time is spacious awareness. So I sometimes say it's a humorous, meant to be taken humorously.

It's my greatest achievement in life is that I don't need to think all the time anymore. And that makes life into a much more pleasant experience if you can be there as just as the presence. And so it's the intensity as I experience it may sometimes vary.

Sometimes presence can in certain occasions almost obliterate everything else. And at other times, it's always there's that space in the background. So it's hard to describe, but I'm sure you all know, you've already, almost all of you have experienced it.

If you're not yet permanently in presence, that's fine, but it is arising. So actually, alignment with the present moment is, you could say is my practice, but it's become second nature. So I can't call it practice anymore.

[Speaker 3] (1:10:20 - 1:11:21)

I would like to say what my practice is, because I actually was a disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for many, many years. And he did, in fact, initiate me into the practice that we all do here. And after a while, I did realize that the practice was like a tool.

And for me, I still do it because I'm so used to it. And besides that, sometimes even though I ignore the thoughts, they give me great ideas. And I make a living by selling words.

So I stay with the practice. Eckhart, how would you define happiness? Is being happy a realistic goal?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:22 - 1:14:25)

Is it a realistic goal? Well, it's partly a question of semantics, by which I mean how, what do we mean when we say happy? I personally don't use that term very much, but I know that, for example, Ramana Maharshi said, your true nature is happiness.

Happiness is your true nature. So he uses that term in a particular way. I don't use the word, I wouldn't use the word that much, because for most people, in common usage, happiness is a high.

You experience a high, and usually a temporary high. Ah, I'm so great! Yeah!

And so it's, you can't really, you cannot be on a permanent high. So if you have a high, you also experience the low. Oh, I thought that was going to be it, but it wasn't it.

So the term that I would use is spaciousness, joy, perhaps. It's that which makes the Buddha smile, when you look at statues, the good ones, of the Buddha. In the bad ones, he looks miserable.

But in the good ones, there's a very, there's just a hint of a smile on his lips. And why, why is the Buddha smiling? If you approach Buddhism from a purely intellectual viewpoint, in some universities, they'll tell you that Buddhism is a life-denying religion, because they don't really understand it.

They only understand the statements. And Buddha said, emptiness is the ultimate answer, which of course is true. But you cannot, if you've never had even a glimpse of emptiness, you will think it's life-denying.

So the Buddha has a slight smile, because no matter what the Buddha experiences, he experiences everything against the background of emptiness. Another word for which would be spaciousness, or another word for which would be stillness. There's always that stillness, and the Buddha is the stillness.

The Buddha is rooted in the stillness, which is when we use words, we create a duality, but the Buddha is the stillness. So that is really, I think when Ramana Maharshi used the term happiness, and I don't know what, whether it's even a correct translation from what he used in his native language, that is, I believe, what he pointed to. I personally would not use the term happiness.

I don't know about you.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:25 - 1:15:55)

Well, in the Buddha's teaching, there are four qualities of consciousness that he calls divine. So the first is loving-kindness. The second is joy, which is not happiness.

Happiness is a thought, okay? Joy is without thought. The third is compassion, and the fourth is equanimity.

And if you really think of these qualities of consciousness, they're actually, at a very primordial level, they are not thought, okay? None of them is thought. All these are very subtle ways of communion, which means me and the other is one.

Okay, so when Eckhart said, you know, happiness is high and low, yeah, happiness is a melodrama, in a way, and joy is not. Joy is essential. This question on Facebook, I'm an artist and drew inspiration for my work from the simple and genuine love that existed between me and my husband until I found out that he betrayed me.

Now I feel like my core is empty and my creativity is dead. How do I inspire myself to dream and imagine again?

[Speaker 1] (1:15:58 - 1:18:51)

Well, that's a sad story, but it comes from... It is, of course, it's a story. But as long as that is very real to you, it's there's suffering in it.

And there's a way out. I'd like to point the way beyond that for this person. Your husband betrayed you, okay.

Your husband is a human being, I assume. Now, I love that term, human being, because we have two words here. We have human and we have being.

Now, that which the love in you, when you were in the presence of your husband, that which you loved in the husband was the same in you. It was the being quality of that human. And the human is the form as which that he assumes that form.

And that form is imperfect. So when you don't know, when you bring them together, you think that love was an illusion, but it was not. You just haven't recognized that there is the dimension of being in him and in you.

And that's from that recognition, love arose. But the mind mixes it up with the form, and the form is imperfect. And so, because of that, now, because you have this thought, what you're telling yourself in your head is now blocking that deeper awareness.

The story that you believe in, in your head, that you are telling yourself, is blocking the deeper awareness of being. And that is, once you recognize that, you can feel that love again, because that love is who you essentially are. And so, and then the possibility of forgiveness also arises.

Your husband, you forgive the human, and whatever unconsciousness the human manifested. But the real forgiveness cannot arise until you know yourself as the formless, no longer identify with what arises in the world of form. And then you can look through that, and forgiveness arises naturally.

[Speaker 3] (1:18:52 - 1:19:13)

We say that the husband is a human being, but he is also being human? Yes. What is the best possible outcome of a life that one could hope for?

What should we strive to create for ourselves? Strive. Strive.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:16 - 1:23:41)

Well, the best and the one single worthwhile, truly worthwhile thing is to encounter, to realize, to discover transcendence in your life, so that you're no longer trapped in that narrow, personalized, form-identified, thought-identified sense of self. And if there's nothing to you but that, the person, then life is a very frustrating business. And this is what the Buddha referred to when he used the term suffering, and said, whatever you do, wherever you go, you will encounter that.

But he also pointed the way beyond, so there is the possibility of realizing your formless, true nature. And that begins with a gap between two thoughts. It begins this moment, when your attention moves fully into this moment, not just awareness of sense perceptions, but also, and this sounds a little strange, but it's key, awareness of awareness.

So if you can be aware at this moment, not only of that which arises in your immediate sense experience, or thoughts, or emotional field, but if you can be aware, that we're in a language, we always, of course, language always creates duality, so you have to make allowances for that. If you can be aware right now, you have to, it can only be realized now. If you can be aware that you are aware right now, in addition to the things that you perceive, there is a space of awareness.

That is what makes life worthwhile. And then, when that arises, and then becomes a living realization in you, that is really the one thing, as Jesus said, there's only one thing that truly matters. And then you have chosen that one thing.

That's the Mary and Martha story in the Gospels, where Jesus says to Mary, you have chosen the one thing that really matters. Whereas Martha was running around, oh, I have to think about this, do this, get this ready. There's only, there's one thing that truly matters.

And then, the rest of your life, what form it takes, is secondary. It will unfold beautifully, with, of course, comes, nothing is impermanent, and you won't need to cling to things anymore, and be afraid that they leave you. And, very important, you won't have expectations that the world is going to make you happy.

This is a very fundamental thing that many, it's an error in their mind. They believe that the world somehow has the ability, if they could only engineer things in such a way that everything would just fit neatly into place, and at some point, they can arrive at a place where the world is going to provide them with fulfillment. And, of course, advertising knows that, and so, advertising is built on that, to foster that belief that the world can do that.

So, once you know yourself as awareness, which is a joyous thing, there's a deep joy and satisfaction in knowing yourself as awareness, then you don't expect anymore that situations, conditions, or people should make you happy. And, the paradox is, when you don't have the expectation that people, situation of people, should make you happy and satisfy you, they are actually quite satisfying.

[Speaker 3] (1:23:51 - 1:24:25)

So, that's what, you know, stresses the universe is not behaving the way I think it should. Our culture seems to foster the desire to judge ourselves, honing in on what is wrong with our body, where we have fallen short, how we are not measuring us up. Many of us have a harsh inner critic, and we say things to ourselves that we would never say to a friend or loved one.

How do we learn to turn off this inner judge when it has been harping at us for many decades?

[Speaker 1] (1:24:26 - 1:29:23)

The inner critic, the, for some people have that very strongly, other people experience it from time to time. Sometimes the mind is, you feel happy with yourself, and then the next day, something else. But it manifests in different ways for different people.

For some, it's mainly the inner critic, criticizing myself. For others, others are very critical about other people. Others are very critical about situations they find themselves in.

They're always complaining. You may remember from before you awakened spiritually that you always, a lot of the time, there was this compulsive mind activity. A lot of that was actually complaining about things and people and where one is and why they should have, why didn't they, they should, countless stories that come.

And so people are trapped in this torture of their own minds. And the question is how to step out. Anything we say about how to go beyond that presupposes that there's already a minimum of awareness in you from where you can realize what your mind is doing.

So that needs to be there. And that is there in all of you and much more, of course. There are still millions of people on the planet.

They're also on their way. They don't have yet the minimum awareness. Tell a terrorist or any fundamentalist to be aware of their own thoughts and or question them.

They will get very angry. And so I don't recommend that. They are not ready for it.

So but you can recognize what your mind is doing to yourself. And you can then, if there is an awareness there, and then you can choose to direct your attention somewhere else. You don't have to follow everything.

You don't have to believe everything you think. Somebody even made that into a bumper sticker. I loved it.

You don't have to believe everything you think. And that is an enormous, you can disidentify from your mind and see what the mind is doing. And you can then also, by choice, place your attention on a flower or the sky or anything natural.

And you stepped out. I also recommend for people who are very much burdened by the mind, place your attention into the inner energy field of your body. Feel the aliveness that pervades the entire body.

And then you can't think that much anymore. You can't feel both the aliveness within your body and think a lot. So that takes your attention into wake up in this.

I don't know if anybody still experiences that here. You wake up at two or three in the morning and you're thinking. And it's not pleasant.

It's about my problems. And if you then suddenly you discover the futility of it, and then you also have a choice. At that moment, you have a choice.

And then you can say, I choose to place my attention on the inner energy field of the body. And from one moment, from one minute to the next, you're suddenly, you enjoy being awake at night and feel the intense aliveness in every cell of the body. That's one simple way.

It's a kind of meditation practice. It's one simple way of taking attention away from thinking. When you realize it is not only futile, it's also destructive.

And that needs to be then practiced if you have a meditation period. That's wonderful, of course, daily meditation period. But in addition, I always recommend mini meditations throughout the day, which could be a simple thing as taking two or three conscious breaths while you're waiting for the elevator.

Or do something consciously with full attention that usually you do unconsciously. Anything that is usually a means to an end, make it into an end in itself. Washing your hands.

Be totally present. You're getting out of your mind. Walking down a few steps.

Be totally present rather than needing to get to the bottom. Be there in every step. So little mini meditations gradually help you to disidentify from the movement of thought.

So this is what I would recommend to our questioner and to anybody else who is still burdened by their minds or tortured by their minds.

[Speaker 3] (1:29:31 - 1:31:01)

So for those of you who like formulas, here's one. Stop. Okay.

It's an acronym. S stands for stop. T stands for take three deep breaths as Eckhart just told us to.

And while you're taking those three deep breaths, smile everywhere in your body from head to toe. O stands for observe. Observe your body, as you said.

And P stands for proceed with love and kindness. Break the response. Okay.

So it's 9 o'clock and our live stream is ending. So I want to bring Uwain. We don't want to lose this opportunity at least.

I've known Uwain now for 25 years. We've grown up together. He just looks a little older.

But we are brothers. What am I doing here?

[Speaker 4] (1:31:06 - 1:43:52)

It was at the very last observation you made, Deepak, that the word love finally came in. And it's been my journey to learn to come to a new kind of love in my life. I have been reading a great teacher from Bulgaria whose name was Peter Dunov, of whom Einstein said at the height of his popularity back in the 30s that the whole world bows before me and I bow before Peter Dunov.

Peter Dunov was a man who talked about a different kind of love. He said there are basically three kinds of love. One is human love.

And human love is a love that changes and varies. So this is a love that, I love you, but you came home late and you forgot Valentine's Day, so I don't love you so much. And it's constantly changing.

I love you, I hate you, and on and on it goes. And then there's a love that he called spiritual love, which is a love that never changes, but it does vary. This is a love that I can only define as the love I have for my children.

I have eight of them. And it really doesn't matter what they do or how they behave, how they conduct themselves. The love is just there.

I'm sure the people who've committed some of these atrocities that we've been experiencing the last few months here in America, the mothers of these people still love them. Having eight children, I know that it varies. Sometimes it's a little stronger than others, but it's always there.

And I'm sure you know that with your children. And I see Rita there as we were talking about her children, your children. And then there's a love that Peter Doonough spoke

about, which is a love that he calls divine love.

And this is a love that never changes. And this is a love that never varies. And this is a love I aspire to.

And the only way I can describe it, it's in the gospel of Thomas in the Nag Hammadi scrolls that were found in 1945. Jesus is quoted as saying that when you make the two one, then you can enter the kingdom. And the opening line of the Tao Te Ching, a book that I studied and lived and wrote a whole series of essays about, the opening line of the Tao says the Tao that can be named is not the Tao.

And so I try to imagine a love that Jesus spoke about when you take the two and make it one. So this is a love that has no opposites. So if I were to ask you the word, I said, what is joy?

And I say, what is the opposite of joy? Most of you would probably say something like despair or sadness and so on. And if I ask you to imagine a joy that has no opposite, it's just joy.

Or if I were to ask you, what's the opposite of love? We could come up with many antonyms to love. Try to imagine a love that has no opposite.

That's all there is. Nothing else can come up. I was thinking when Eckhart was speaking about what is it in us that you talk about happiness.

And I was thinking, I don't use the word happy either. Shakespeare in one of his plays said, I think he said it this way, my crown is in my heart, not on my head, not decked with diamonds, nor Indian stones, nor to be seen. My crown is called content.

A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy. And that kind of love is the love I aspire to. Contentment, a love that knows no opposite.

Now we're talking up here about being human, and of course we're all in human bodies, and making the two one is almost impossible for us. There's a woman here in the audience who I didn't even know yesterday that I was going to be here today. I just happened to be staying at a hotel nearby.

I'm going to see my publisher tomorrow to do some recording, and then I'm going to Denver to do a workshop on the weekend, a writer's workshop. And sitting next to me on the table is Eckhart Tolle, my friend, man who I've done a program with recently called The Importance of Being Extraordinary. And of course to my left is a man who we call each other brothers.

We've loved each other very, very much since the early 1990s. I think it was 1990. So the idea that I was going to be here, I didn't even know this was going on.

And Eckhart said, why don't you come, and here I am. And when I walked in, someone else walked up to me and said, Wayne, what are you doing here? And her name is Anita Moorjani.

Stand up, Anita. Where are you, dear? And Anita, I have written a foreword to a book that occurs called Dying to Be Me.

And she, I think she's speaking here, are you speaking here tomorrow? On Friday here at the Chopra Center? Right, right.

So Anita has described what it was like. I mean, she had end-stage lymphoma cancer for five years, was down to 82 pounds, had tumors the size of lemons throughout her entire body, and only had a few hours left to live. And became an observer and watched this whole process.

And I saw something about her experience on the internet and located her in Hong Kong. She happened to be in Dubai when I found her, and I asked her if she would write her story. And she wrote her story and sent it to me to see if we could publish it.

And I sent it back to her and said, it isn't good enough. I want you to go back to the state that you were in when you experienced the kind of love I'm speaking about here right now. A love that has no opposites.

The words awareness have been tossed around up here, higher awareness. But in that state, that state where there is only one, there is no opposite, whatever you place your attention on, you become. And the only thing that you can feel is a kind of unconditional love.

So for me, as I aspire, it is to live a love that has no judgment, no criticism, no condemnation towards any of God's creations. And if we can get to that place, and while we are human, there will still always be the two, the dichotomy will always be there, there will always be the opposite. But in the world that Eckhart describes so beautifully in The Power of Now, we can do this inside here.

In here, we don't have to have those judgments, those criticisms, those condemnations. And when we get to that place, because as many of you know, I was diagnosed with leukemia three years ago. And I had an experience of having a remote healing from John of God down in Brazil.

Many of you, probably everyone in this room knows who that is. And what I thought happened is that these entities entered into my body, and they just healed me of leukemia. But that isn't what happened.

What happened is that these entities entered my body, and they took out fear. The word leukemia is loaded with fear. It isn't about fear of dying.

It's just, it's such a word. It's just cancer of the blood, you know, every word going through your body. It's all of the things, all of the things about cancer, the cancer that Anita spoke about so brilliantly in her revised edition of the book, which was done so beautifully.

And so it is, I woke up the morning after I had had this remote healing from John of God. And my two of my children were there with me on Maui. One of them was my daughter, and I looked at her, and I just, I had never seen her the way I had seen her that morning.

And I put my arms around her, and I just said, I just can't describe to you how much I love you. And I looked at my son, and I put my arms around him, and I looked outside. I live on the ocean.

The ocean looked different. It's never, it never, I just had never seen it before. The palm trees just look different.

The birds, the grass, every stranger that I encountered. In the Course, it says there are two ways of reacting. There's love and there's fear.

And everything that is love cannot be fear. And everything that is fear cannot be love. So what I would ask you to do is to ask yourself, how much of my life and the decisions that I make are based upon fear?

Do you eat the foods that you eat because you're afraid that if you don't, you'll get sick? Or do you do it out of love? This is my body, this is the temple I live in, and I want to treat it that way.

Do you drive the speed limit because you love everyone around you and you want them to be safe? Or do you drive the speed limit because you're afraid that if you don't, you're going to get a ticket so you have a radar detector and on and on and on it goes. And I could go on with these kinds of, you can look at almost every single thing that we do in our life, and so many of them are based on fear.

And what Anita's experience was when she was in the other realm is that there is no such thing as fear. And cancer, and Deepak and I have done many programs on this. In fact, I remember in London at the Palladium, you and I standing up there one time asking that question, why so much cancer in our world?

Why so much illness? Why so much disease? Because you used to always say it's perfect health, you know, that we don't, our bodies do not have to, there's nothing physically in there that says these bodies have to get older and they have to deteriorate and they even have to die.

And if we could get the fear out of our hearts and just come from a place of no judgment, no criticism, no condemnation towards any of God's children, we could live what

Shakespeare was speaking about. We could just be content. And that's all I have to say.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:05 - 1:44:07)

Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:44:16 - 1:44:18)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:20 - 1:45:39)

And the fear, of course, perpetuate itself through judgments in the mind. And judgments are thoughts that we identify with, that possess us. So the key then is to disidentify from the judgments and to invite the place of no thought into our lives.

Ramana Maharshi was asked by a disciple or a visitor in his ashram, how can we know that we are making progress on the spiritual path? How do we know that? And Ramana Maharshi said, the degree of absence of thinking is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path.

So now you know whether you're making progress. The degree of absence of thinking is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path. It's as simple as that.

[Speaker 4] (1:45:40 - 1:46:20)

Well said, well said. One other observation, I've just spent the last six months or so in a secluded state of writing every single day. And I've written something called I Can See Clearly Now.

And it's just a look back at all of the things that just like, so there's look back at, I lived 10 years in an orphanage. And what did that result in? And all the way up right through just recently.

And I think about how I happen to be here on this stage tonight, with two people I admire so much and love so much.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:22 - 1:46:32)

Well, it was a synchronistic event brought you here because you were sitting behind the table behind ours last night. It was just amazing. Yes, to have you.

[Speaker 4] (1:46:32 - 1:51:29)

So let's look at, this is just fascinating to me, because having just written about all of this, like we're talking about, you were talking about time, both of you were talking about time earlier. And so I like to think that there's this thing called horizontal time. And

just imagine a line going across here that represents time.

And this is called chronological time, or passing time, or cause and effect time. So what got me here? I made a decision to go down to that restaurant last night to meet with my friend Mark and his daughter.

I didn't even want to do that. But something said, go down there. So there's cause and effect.

So Mark called me. I said, okay, I'm not sure. I don't know.

And on how did I happen to get here to even to San Diego? That's a whole other story about why I'm even here. And you think that you're making all these choices, and cause and effect.

So I did this, and that caused this, and that caused this. And then we showed up in the lobby. And then some young woman from Russia recognized me and wanted me to be on her TV show that she's doing.

She's cooking raw foods. And I said, no, I can't do that. And then we went into the restaurant and then came over.

And I meet Stephen Goldhauer, who was the brother of someone that I was in love with for several years, years back, who I haven't seen in a long time. And I see Greg, who worked at the Omega Institute, and whom I've known. And all of these people are showing up.

And Eckhart comes over. And we just had a program that just come out. And all of this stuff is going on.

So this caused this, caused this, caused this. And then he said, well, we're having this program tomorrow. Would you like to come over?

I said, okay, but I'll go in the back. Because I don't really want the spotlight to be on me. I want it to be on these two guys.

This is their program. So I'll just come in. No, no, no.

We want you to be in the front. We'd like to have... So here I am in the front.

Then I had the psychic experience. And Deepak, my psychic brother, who knows everything anyway. So we've got this whole horizontal thing.

This caused this, caused this. And I could sit down and write them all out, all the reasons how I got here tonight. I'd have to go back to when I was born in 1940, and when my mother was born in 1916, and her mother.

We could just go all the way up to this moment. And here I am. And then there's another kind of time.

And this is a time that isn't represented by a horizontal line, but is represented by a vertical line. And this is a vertical line that goes right up to God. And this line is called eternal time, in which there is no time.

There is no, there's nothing but one. There's only oneness. Okay, so everything in eternal time has already been taken care of.

Carl Jung said, at the same moment that you are a protagonist in your own life, and you're making choices, at the very same moment, you're also the spear carrier, or the extra, in a much larger drama. You are all, he said, doomed to make choices. Now, you want to talk about a paradox, right?

You're doomed, that means it's all taken care of, and within that stance of being doomed, you're making choices. So now we've got this line going straight up, representing eternal time. So my being here right now was already handled.

It was handled the moment of my conception. But the point where this line crosses this line, and that cross is made, at that very point, is where you can see both times operating at the same moment. You can literally see that you are making choices, and they're already taken care of.

Everything is taken care of for you. And so what Deepak and Eckhart have been saying is, there is no need to worry about anything. It's all just taken care of.

And even your worry is a part of the eternal time thing here. And here was the conclusion. This was from a book called, To Know We Are Loved, by Rashad Field.

You know Rashad Field? You know that man? He's still alive.

To Know We Are Loved. He said, and this is the one I want you to walk out of here with, and really think about. Your conception and your death are happening at exactly the same time.

It's the same experience. When you get that, you can get back, and you can see yourself making all of these decisions, but you can also see that it's all handled for you. And in eternal time, there's no opposite, which means there's no past, and there's no future.

There's only... Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (1:51:32 - 1:53:30)

Okay, so I'm going to conclude now, this evening with just three simple observations out of this whole experience. The first is, every event is a conspiracy of the total universe. So

go with the flow, okay?

Second is that love actually does heal, and there's a biological reason why it heals. It creates what is called limbic resonance in your brain, and it starts self-repair mechanisms, what in medicine we call homeostasis. It takes you back to your original state, which is well-being.

And the third is, the love he was speaking for is really so well articulated in the teaching of Nisargadatta Maharaj, who you introduced me to and became my teacher, absolutely. He says, my love radiates from me like light from a bonfire, focused on none and denied to none. So good night and thank you.

I think I understand. I definitely feel the interconnectedness of all of us and the oneness. What I'd love to hear your thoughts on are the unique aspects of our individual existence beyond the world of form and ego.

In other words, is there a part of us, a soul or energy that transcends death?

[Speaker 1] (1:53:32 - 2:29:38)

Well, there's the form which is not just the physical form that you are. There's also the mental form, the psychological form that you are. And deeper than that, there's an energetic formation.

Also consciousness has taken form temporarily and appears as a human being. But what you see on the surface is only a surface appearance. And underneath that, there's the energy that animates the form and that temporarily takes on that particular form.

Also, even that energy, as long as it's behind the body, is there and outlives the body for quite some time. And it's still form, but form is not separate from that which animates the form ultimately. It just appears to be.

So in the same way that the wave movement of the sea is not separate from the sea, the ripple on the ocean is not separate from the ocean, but for a little while it appears as something separate. So on the level of form here, you are a man or a woman, you are of a certain age, you have a certain psychological makeup according to your past and perhaps even past lifetimes, that all operates on the level of form. So you can honor the level of form for what it is without worshipping it or identifying with it and believing that this is who you truly are.

But it doesn't mean that you totally reject it, because it is not separate from the one life, the one unmanifested, timeless life that appears in billions of life forms that continuously come and go, appear, disappear, appear, disappear. Anybody would very quickly find it easy to be connected with the formless dimension if you could see a speeded-up version of life forms as they come and go. And bodies being born, growing up, reaching maturity,

getting old, finally becoming decrepit and dissolving.

If you could see these things in one room, if you could see within two minutes of the people sitting in this room popping out of existence, at least on the level of body, one after the other, dissolving as if they'd never been like soap bubbles, you would very quickly sense an underlying... First, you would be amazed. Here you go.

Even with flowers, sometimes you see it in films, a flower comes out of the ground and immediately withers, and it's gone. If you could see that, you would easily connect with that which is beyond form, and that is the power of becoming aware of the fleetingness of all forms. The essential thing is to be connected with that, and then you can honor the form as which you appear for a while, and be active on the level of form.

It doesn't say, I'm the formless, so I'm never going to do anything again. No, you can take up things, learn to do this, learn to do that, not expecting ultimate fulfillment because nothing is going to give you that on the outside, nothing that you can do or possess or knowledge. None of that can tell you who you essentially are, can give you ultimate fulfillment, and yet you can pursue these things, acquire knowledge, read some more books, enjoy it.

As long as you enjoy it, the level of form has its place. There's no need to say, I'm never going to read another book because it's all illusion. Or you learn to play an instrument, you learn this, you learn that, you deal...

Artistic creation, whatever it is, dance, whatever, enjoy the level of form, but you can only truly enjoy the level of form if you are rooted in the formless. If you're not rooted in, if you don't have that point of stillness, that space of stillness in you while you pursue things, then things will become frustrating to you, and they will, for a little while they might be great, they give you excitement or whatever, or some egoic fulfillment for a little while. Ego is never fulfilled for very long, as the song says, I can't get no satisfaction.

So if you pursue forms and you're not rooted in that essential reality within yourself, all forms will eventually become bitter. Even the most pleasant thing that you pursue, even if you learn to play the piano, you become the greatest pianist, and one day you won't be the greatest pianist, or somebody is greater than you, or arthritis comes into your hands, or whatever, or it's no longer fulfilling after a few years. But whatever it is, all forms that you pursue, for the sake of the form alone, expecting something through your pursuit that it cannot give you, that always life is just one frustrating thing after another, and then people, very many people become disillusioned or cynical and don't believe in anything anymore.

Well, of course, you've been pursuing all the illusions all your life, and some people lose all interest suddenly in anything because they've seen, but that's, perhaps it was, there

was a man who wrote, I don't know how it got into the New Testament, one book of the New Testament, Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity, written by somebody who's done it all, and has seen how vain, now vanity in that sense is the old meaning of the word, it means useless, empty of meaning.

Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity, I've done it all, he says, I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to, it's a lovely piece of writing, it's nothing to do with God or anything, or how it got into the New Testament, I don't know, but I'm glad it's there because it's a beautiful piece of writing, it expresses a state of consciousness of somebody who has pursued things on the level of form, and expresses his dissatisfaction, his deep dissatisfaction with things.

And then all he comes up with, well, you just eat and drink and be merry, that's a superficial thing, it's not no true solution there, it's just, it's an expression of a disillusioned state of consciousness, but it's a beautiful expression of it, and so it's a lovely work of art to read that, and it's a faithful reflection of a state of consciousness that is disconnected, that thought there was some answer on the level of form, when you know that there is no ultimate answer and otherwise no ultimate fulfillment, no ultimate self-realization, I want to find myself through this or that, then the world of form becomes actually quite a pleasant place when you do not have unreasonable expectations, you honor it, you play with it, you participate to some extent, or to a large extent, and yet one of the things, of course, that's expressed in many ancient scriptures, such as the Bhagavad Gita, you are not attached to the results. Now the Bhagavad Gita tells you, don't be attached to the results, but it's, what comes prior to that is to be connected with the formless stillness, the alive stillness inside you, it's very hard, if not impossible, not to be attached to the result if you are not rooted in the being.

If you're not rooted in the being, you need the result of your doing. Do not be attached to a result really only works if you are connected, and then you can see, you can enjoy action in the world of form without being attached to the outcome, and that's an enormous freedom, and only then can you truly enjoy the doing. If you're attached to the outcome, you have a mental projection of where you want to get to, and that spoils to a large extent the joy in doing what you do, because you need to get there, you think, it's a future point that doesn't really exist, and even if you get what you wanted, if you're not, if you're disconnected, it's not going to make you happy.

Even if the outcome that you wanted comes, it's still not happy, or the very outcome that before you thought would make you happy makes you unhappy. Hence the saying, there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want, and getting what you want. So as we sit here with nothing happening except one little thing, the mind can drift off and create some imaginary happening, so you start thinking about past, future, dreamland, because the mind is not comfortable with nothing happening.

So you can, as you sit here, drift off into dreamland of past and future until finally the session actually starts, not realising that it has started already. In the same way that people wait for their lives to start, not realising that it started already. So what's the alternative then to drifting off?

The alternative is to just be present with your attention in the simplicity of this moment where there's almost nothing happening. So what's left of you when you're not following some train of thought, and the space opens up? What's left then of this moment?

What's the content of this moment? Just whatever your senses are perceiving, the totality of the room, the lights, some noises, the voice, and that which makes it all possible, there's a light in which it appears, the consciousness behind it all, that's what's left. It has no form, no time, just presence, and that's who you are beyond past and future, nothing to do with your personal history, except that your personal history has brought you to this moment of being aware that there is a dimension in you that has nothing to do with your personal history, and nothing to do with conceptualisation in the mind, any kind of mental noise, just a kind of an aware space, and that's the ground, all what arises out of that is joy and aliveness, and it's peaceful to know yourself as that is peaceful, it is peace, but a live peace. So the peace is already there as the essence, never in conditions, outer conditions, or mental conditions, cannot provide you with peace except the delusion of peace for short moments. So to seek peace in conditions, whether mental conditions, or external conditions, is frustrating, and you overlook the simple fact that the realm of peace, which is the unconditioned consciousness in you, the timeless, the light of the world, Jesus called it, is already there, in its fullness, has always been there, will always be there, although saying has and will doesn't make sense because it's timeless, but it's being, it's overlooked, the essence is overlooked because of the seductive nature of the world of form, thoughts that continuously arise, sense perceptions, and you lose yourself in forms, thought forms, and external forms, and following up, and then you're full of stuff, looking for yourself in some other stuff, more stuff for my mind, and then so you overlook the essence that's always there, so it's a redirecting of attention from attention to form, and now we have to be careful, if I say, attention to the formless dimension in you, that sounds as if the formless dimension in you could become an object of your attention, but it can't, because the formless dimension in you cannot become an object of your attention, of your consciousness, because the formless dimension is consciousness, consciousness can't become an object to itself, so in that sense you can never find the essence of who you are as if you say, I know, I have it, you can never say, I have it, all you can ever say is, I am it, so it can't be an object, you cannot make yourself into an object, and I know myself, you can't know yourself, you can know lots of things about yourself, all to do with mental content, but you cannot know yourself in its, who you are in your essence, because you are the eternal subject, the basis of all knowing, the moment you say, I know myself, then there's I and myself, you've already split yourself into two, and basically that's the ego,

where you split yourself into two and say, oh, that's me, and then you have a relationship with yourself, which my dog does not have a relationship with himself, the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, the split hasn't occurred yet, me and who I think I am, so usually the progression for people is, first you have a dysfunctional relationship with yourself, you hate yourself a lot of the time, and sometimes you say, oh, I'm really great, but not for long, and then you doubt yourself, and then you're learning about becoming more loving towards yourself, that's great, that's the stage of stickers on your bathroom mirror, I love myself, that's the intermediate stage, and then from there you go on to the realization that there are not two of you, that you are yourself, and what's left is the simple fact that I am who I am, or I am that I am, which by the way was God's answer from the Old Testament, when they asked God, who are you? So you can't know yourself, you can only be yourself, there's nothing conceptual to know, if it's conceptual, that's not who you are, in other words, you have to embrace ignorance, as the Course in Miracles says, your understanding is not an important contribution to the truth, and of course, there's something in you that wants to, I want to understand myself more, because you can go that way for a long time, and of course, there's always more, and eventually you get to the end of the road where you give up, and that's the moment when you're no longer a problem to yourself, and when you're not a problem to yourself, by the way, you're not a problem to others anymore either, how many people walk around with an identity, the sense of identity, that basically consists of the belief that they are a problem, which seeks a solution, of course, there is a solution, but that's not where the ego itself is seeking, the solution is already here, it's not in time, this moment, the realization that at this moment, you already are who you are, as the awareness in which the form of this moment appears, in other words, you become aware that you are aware, you know yourself as the awareness, the awareness knows itself, that's an amazing realization, that's the I am realization, but not this or that, just I am, and that's peace, to know yourself through that act of not knowing, not to know yourself in any conceptual sense, to be yourself as the awareness, and then the dance of forms, of course, continues in life, and there's a piece in the background, the art of living is to be aware that you are the awareness, be aware that you are the presence, be aware as the presence, the awareness, while not only you look at things and observe things, but even while you do and talk, and you'll notice spaces in your life, and that's vital, spaces while in between things, where before there was no space, at least you didn't notice it, but now you notice that there are spaces, many spaces in your life where there's an opening into just pure presence, and it could just be picking up an object and putting it down again, looking at a tree without labeling it in any way, just being the perceiving presence for it, walking from here to there without making each step a means to an end, but just be present with every step, the spacious stillness when you're listening to another human being, just being there as the space, not as an object of some mental noise, and so there's a gradual thing where the personality recedes a bit in your life, still operates when it's needed, but more and more there's awareness that arises, you are there as an aware presence rather than as a person with a past and a

future, so the person begins to become transparent somewhat to the light of awareness that shines through the form, whereas before it was dense, it's just pushing against, trying to get through little chinks, occasionally get through, you have moments of ah, and then it's gone, so it gets through. Now you may notice a certain alertness is required, no tension or strain, but a certain alertness so that thought does not get hold of you and drag you along where it wants to go, the old conditioned thinking, so certain alertness is required, and we are here, this is our meditation today here, the alertness needs to be there for otherwise you drift off into the dream state of identification with thinking, and then suddenly, oh, out of that alertness, thoughts can come, but they will be not a replay of the old conditioned thinking, but more vitally alive thoughts when they do come, insights, realizations, a new way of aliveness when you, that is there, a fresh new thought, inspired, creative, and at other times, there's just, of course, love is part of what comes out of that unconditioned space, can't come from anywhere else. We are lucky today to have an honored guest here, it's becoming a tradition as part of our sessions, and I'd like, this guest does not need introduction, but I would like to introduce her by telling you how I first got introduced to her, she doesn't know that, I haven't told you yet, in, it was about 1986 perhaps, and I was living in London, and the Course in Miracles had just been published, I think the year before, in England, in a one-volume paperback, and whereas at first I, when I heard Course in Miracles, I said, that's probably just, it's another weird thing that's come through from California, I had the European prejudice, later I realized that many wonderful things do also come from California, some weird things too, of course I didn't realize the Course in Miracles didn't really originally come from California at all, it came from Manhattan, Columbia University, well unofficially, not sponsored by Columbia University, and so I was visiting a friend, having tea, and talking a bit about this Course in Miracles, that I had actually discovered was actually quite profound, so I had bought a copy, and my friend said, oh I want you to listen to this, somebody gave me this tape, a copy of a copy, sound isn't too good, but you'll still understand, this is a woman, she gives talks about the Course in Miracles, okay I'll just put it on, now listen to this, and he put it on, and I, it almost seemed like I breathed in at the beginning of the talk, and I didn't breathe out until the end of it, half an hour later, there was such fire and empowerment in it, when the talk finished after half an hour, I went, wow, that's amazing, and I, what's her name, and she said, oh I can't remember, oh it's Marianne Williamson, oh never heard of her, at that time there was no, there were no books yet, and so on, so the, I still remember how the talk finished, she said at the end, and it's almost over, thank you very much, now I can't remember what that refers to, I think it must refer to the egoic insanity of the world, and it's almost over, and I, we have her here, and I'm going to ask her in a minute, whether she still thinks it's almost over, please welcome Marianne Williamson, please, so is it almost over?

[Speaker 2] (2:29:40 - 2:30:12)

Well, as you well know, even though it began in millions, millions of years ago, in time as we know it, it's not actually happening, it's a hallucination, which is all just the twinkling of an eye, anyway, so from that perspective, it's always beginning, it's always almost over, and it's always ending,

[Speaker 1] (2:30:12 - 2:30:16)

in any of these moments that you discuss, and in another sense, it's over already,

[Speaker 2] (2:30:17 - 2:30:29)

yeah, exactly, in any moment, which you so profoundly describe, it can't exist, yes, yes, so when we're with you, it's over, yes,

[Speaker 1] (2:30:32 - 2:31:34)

yes, and so how is the, now the thing is the realization in humans, that that dimension is there, where this is recognized as a kind of dream, that the important thing is, whether humans realize that, because as long as you don't realize it, you are part of that dream, which very often turns into a nightmare, how is the, I know that Marianne is much more in touch with, I am with the world, the current affairs, and so on, especially in the States, how do you see the collective consciousness in, let's just maybe talk about North America, and later about the world, how do you see the state of the collective consciousness now?

[Speaker 2] (2:31:35 - 2:36:15)

Well, from a spiritual perspective, we can't have a meaningful inquiry about anything in the world, without the context of that inquiry being what's happening in the realm of spirit or pure consciousness, and one of the main points of the Course, and any study of truth with a capital T, is that there is only one of us here, and that in truth there is no world, it's all happening inside us, and because within that perspective, all minds are joined, because there's only one of us here, in whatever moment we as individuals reach that place of pure consciousness, the presence of which you speak, holy instant, and Course in Miracles, we don't just create that greater opening for ourselves, but simultaneously it's created for everyone else as well.

I was telling you yesterday about a fascinating documentary I saw the other night called I Am, and in the documentary there's a conversation about cruelty versus cooperation in the animal kingdom, and there was something there that I'd never seen, and it was if a group of deer, or a group of gazelle, or a group of any animals that all travel together, how do they decide which waterhole to go to, or when birds are flying, what happens to make the whole flock fly a certain way, and what was so fascinating to me was it was in this documentary they were saying that in this group, I can't remember if it was gazelle, or deer, or something along that line, there is an alpha male leader of the pack, but that

in the decision of what waterhole to go to, and there were three of them, it wasn't the alpha male who made the decision. It was as each individual gazelle, or deer, whatever it was, turned their head towards a particular waterhole. When 51 percent of the animals turned their head in one direction, the whole group of them went there, and that often the alpha male was just like, oh, okay, we'll go there, and I thought that was so amazing.

We talk about that in terms of 100th monkey, or the tipping point, whatever that is, but this elucidation of the 51 percent in nature I thought was fascinating. So I feel hopeful. First of all, I think hope itself is a moral imperative.

I feel hopeful about the state of humanity, because there are so many groups just like this, because you, people like yourself, are being filmed, and people literally all over the world are participating in this deeper inquiry and experience. It's not just an abstract teaching, it's the entire journey trickling down, and this is clearly happening, and it does not belong to any one ethnic group, or geographical region, or religion. So the state of humanity, for me personally, is just fine, thank you.

The problem we have, or the challenge we have, the situation we have, is that there are institutional identities, mainly political, financial, in terms of business, technology, wielding tremendous material power, and that material power takes profound forms, such as nuclear bombs. And even though those material identities are never the source of the enlightened progress, I believe that they are there in a way as a signal to us not to tarry.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:18 - 2:36:18)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:19 - 2:36:46)

Not to tarry, because, as the Course in Miracles says, the ego is suspicious at best and vicious at worst. And as soon as we reach that vibratory field of whether it's 51 percent or whatever it is, then all of those material forms will fall of their own dead weight. Yes.

As soon as there's enough light, darkness cannot exist.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:47 - 2:37:13)

Yes. We already see that happening to some extent, some of the monolithic, egoically created structures are... The wall in Germany.

Yes, collapsing from within. Of course. Russian communism collapsing from within.

It's almost the saving grace, perhaps, of the ego that it seems to have built into it a self-destruct mechanism that eventually gets triggered.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:14 - 2:39:39)

Well, the Course in Miracles says there is a limit beyond which we cannot miscreate. However, in Course in Miracles terms, it is not up to you what you learn, it is merely up to you whether you learn through joy or through pain. Oh, the ego's dominance will fall.

The only issue is, do we go away of wisdom or do we go away, which would involve immeasurable amounts of human suffering? And that is our choice in the matter. Not whether the ego's dominance will end, because like you said, it's got a built-in self-destruct.

The issue is, how is this going to end? Is it going to end through joy or through suffering? I'm a mother, and any parent has had the experience of something that happens when this fierce impulse arises within you and you say to your child about whatever it is, that will not happen in his house.

And I look forward to the collective uprising in humanity, realizing that every child on this planet is one of our children, and realizing now that this entire earth is our house, it's our home. I think when it comes to certain forms of possibility, which are nothing short of catastrophic, just as we would, seeing that possibility of catastrophe inherent in a situation, say to one child, that will not happen here, that we will get to that place about this planet, that will not happen here. Because as we do, as that conviction, because the Course in Miracles says miracles arise from conviction, as the realization that the transformation will occur, but that it is in our hands, how quickly it occurs, and how much suffering it does or does not involve, when that understanding is met with a conviction, we will not go that way.

Then I believe something joyful beyond, just like the night of the falling of the Berlin Wall, times what? A million?

[Speaker 1] (2:39:40 - 2:40:12)

Yes, yes. So what is the individual's role as far as the huge egoically created structures is concerned? I'm a kind of person, I'm almost withdrawn a bit from the world, except for the teaching that goes out into the world.

You're a little bit more of an activist, so how do you see your role as far as the...

[Speaker 2] (2:40:12 - 2:40:32)

Well, from a Course in Miracles perspective, we are all given our own assignment. We all have a particular part to play. You are a profound player in the world, as everybody here knows, because you are acting so profoundly on the level of cause.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:32 - 2:40:32)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:40:34 - 2:42:41)

And when we are in that state that you mentioned earlier, of pure consciousness, we receive nothing short of instruction, whether it's conceived of that way or not. It's interesting, looking at you, having been born in Germany, moving to London, ending up in Canada, I feel strongly that there's something here about honoring one's incarnation, where you were born, nationality, sex, sexuality. And even though in your case, clearly, there's a profound internationalism to your assignment.

And you and I have discussed how my daughter lives in England, and she's got some soul connection to England, even though she was born in the United States. I have some... I take very personally and deeply the successes and failures, both contributions and mistakes of the United States as an American woman.

But from a Course in Miracles perspective, which is just one statement of truth, of course, at the deepest level, we're neither male, female, black, white, Jew, Gentile, American, Canadian. I mean, those are all... But when we are in that place of depth inquiry, and depth knowing, and experience, we're beyond all of that.

And yet we are sent to work. And you work plenty out there. And the Course in Miracles says every day, we are to say, where would you have me go?

What would you have me do? What would you have me say? And to whom?

So I just try to do that as much as the next person does.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:41 - 2:42:48)

So honoring the form without identifying with it and believing that's who you are.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:48 - 2:42:50)

Or taking it too seriously.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:50 - 2:42:52)

Yes, that's an important...

[Speaker 2] (2:42:52 - 2:42:57)

Gandhi said, the greatest service I can be to my country is if I can reduce myself to zero.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:59 - 2:43:52)

Oh, that's a wonderful statement. So that really means discovering the unconditioned

dimension in yourself. That's when you...

The form as which you appear ultimately is recognized as an illusion, not who you are. So the elimination of ego is the really inherently connected with the... What is perhaps the central point of this teaching?

The possibility of compulsive thinking coming to an end, old conditioned compulsive thinking, so that a space arises in you where there is no thinking, but just pure awareness.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:53 - 2:46:03)

It's counterintuitive. But when we are there, realizing the illusory nature of the realm of form, that's when we have power within that realm. Because we don't take it seriously at the same level, we no longer fear it.

We no longer fear its dance because we know that we are not that. We are not its success or its failures. And that's when we have the power from this perspective that we so embrace to do that which we are sent to do within it.

Like that slogan, what would you do with your life if you had no fear of what the outcome would be? Because when you were talking before about how the dream has become a nightmare, I don't know if you were saying that here or when we were talking before, that this world is a dream and it has become a nightmare. In A Course in Miracles, it says we do not go from the nightmare to awakening.

We go from the nightmare to a happy dream. So that when, you know, right now we have 17,000 children on this earth who starve every day, just that fact alone. We have a billion people on this planet who live on \$1, \$1.25 and less a day. Now when we have a planet where, and no dearth of food by the way, when we have a planet where everyone is fed, where basically there is no unnecessary human suffering, it will still be a world of bodies, therefore it will still be a dream, but it will have become a happy dream and then we can wake up. Which is real different from a lot of those people with the stickers in their bathroom, I love myself, I love myself, I love myself, because it's a real slippery slope to therefore I don't have to engage in the world because it's all an illusion anyway. It's not my karma if a child is starving, etc.

Right? Am I correct?

[Speaker 1] (2:46:03 - 2:50:06)

Yes. So as sometimes happens in people's dreams, in the middle of the dream they realize they are dreaming. The dream can still continue and this is very much when you wake up here, you realize what comes to an end is the identification with form, because you are rooted, I'm using of course somewhat different terminology from The Course in

Miracles, but you know it's the same thing.

So you're rooted in the formless. When you're rooted in the formless, the eternal in yourself, which we can call inner space, which we can call stillness, which we can call pure awareness, when you're rooted in that, then the world of form not only, as you said, is no longer taken absolutely seriously, I sometimes put it this way, I say it matters, but it does not matter absolutely. It has an importance, but its importance is relative, it's not absolute.

The only absolute importance is whether you know who you are in your essence, and that's, Jesus said that with Mary and Martha, when Martha was running around getting concerned with all the things that need to be doing, and Mary's only chosen to listen, but that means you have chosen, he said only one thing is ultimately needed, and you have chosen that one thing. So I don't think he said never to do anything again or work in the kitchen, but to know what is primary, and then what is secondary, tends to unfold with much greater ease, and no longer creates the suffering that is there inevitably when you believe that that's all there is and take it for absolutely real, and everything is deadly serious and matters. That's why people walk around through life, they're really frightened throughout their life, what's going to happen next, it's all, it's the world of form is threatening to them, and the world is perceived as hostile basically, and that's the reason is, and they're trying to rearrange the world so that it's no longer hostile, but it doesn't work.

No matter how you rearrange things, it's still, you feel it as hostile, and so, and then the realization comes, well it doesn't work that way, you have to first find the peace that is an essential part of who you are beyond form, that's always there, not dependent on time, and then from there, you can deal with the things of the world, give the world of form its due, even participate, but it is no longer that nightmarish thing that it was before, when you were trying to get something out of the world, to find fulfillment or whatever, and so that is perhaps what Causing Miracles means, and what you just mentioned, where as you begin to wake up, it turns into a pleasant dream, it's still the world of form, but it's as you're rooted in being, first of all, you no longer create suffering for yourself, because usually your mind is the thing that creates suffering for you, and you don't create suffering for others, that's an enormous contribution, it's a contribution of not adding to the suffering of the world, enormous thing, so that's the first thing that happens, and then, that's how the world changes, but it becomes a more benign dream.

[Speaker 2] (2:50:07 - 2:52:59)

In A Course in Miracles, when it's talking about the world of form, it says about the world and the illusion form, it's not that it's bad, it's that it's nothing, and that it's holiness or unholy has to do with the purposes the mind ascribes to it, so when we, I love in the Course when he says, let me use your hands, let me use your feet, when we look at the

realm of form with a kind of divine attachment, we are not less invested in what occurs here, we are invested in love, I love that line, be fully invested in an effort, but not attached to the result, and I think that this is a very important issue, because if we get this wrong, it makes the spiritual seeker ineffective in ways that perhaps we do not wish to be, look at something like you're here in Canada, you can turn on television, Canada humanitarian aid workers, your servicemen and women are all over the world, um, doing profound work, risking their lives, that's significant, you don't want to not let that in, you want to let that in deeply, because once again, it is a realm of form and a realm of profound power, anytime our spiritual, to me, anytime our spiritual inquiry in any way ignores the suffering of human beings, it does not include that as a factor, the unnecessary suffering of human beings, then perhaps there's a little insidious ego influence that we want to look at there, yes, I mean, from A Course in Miracles, this perspective, this entire room is filled with illusion, the fact that your body is separate from your body is all an illusion, but that doesn't mean this room is not filled with profound reality, which is the love inside us, so for me, in the realm of form, yes, it's all nothing, but when I got a call, would you like to go be with Eckhart Tolle and do this, and what seems to me the obvious blessing, a personal conversation with you as well, it's not like nothing real was going on here, it's something profoundly real, using the realm of form as a teaching device, so that's how I've...

Yes, yes, yes, it's beautiful.

[Speaker 1] (2:53:08 - 2:54:03)

The importance of the present moment, I was telling you earlier, many years ago, I copied from A Course in Miracles all the sayings about the importance of being present, and it says, for example, the closest, the present moment, or the holy instant, as it's called, is the closest approximation to eternity that this world offers, so the eternity, of course, is the timeless dimension, not everlasting time. The Course in Miracles is full of the importance of what I call presence, of the importance of salvation is offered to you in this instant.

It says it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:03 - 2:54:08)

And the only place where eternity intersects with linear time is in the present moment.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:08 - 2:54:10)

Yes, yes, yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:11 - 2:54:13)

You've led the world to a profound understanding.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:15 - 2:54:19)

That's the vertical dimension of depth, yeah.

[Speaker 2] (2:54:19 - 2:54:58)

You know, in both the Christian cross and in the Jewish Star of David, the visual symbol is that of the intersecting dimensions of the vertical and the horizontal, and the way The Course in Miracles talks about Jesus, it says, he lived on the earth, but thought only the thoughts of heaven, which takes us back to that, how do you dwell within the realm of form, with your feet planted firmly here, but you're thinking so above this realm that the two intersect divinely and harmoniously and beautifully. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:04 - 2:55:33)

So you've come since the talk that I listened to in 86, or whenever the talk that you gave, and then after that for a few years, I didn't hear anything more about, except that I went to a talk you gave, because I loved that recorded talk so much. The following year, you came to London, you gave a talk at the Mind-Body-Spirit Festival, and I went there and enjoyed that very much.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:33 - 2:55:34)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:34 - 2:55:35)

You didn't see me, but I saw you.

[Speaker 2] (2:55:36 - 2:55:37)

Although, maybe I did.

[Speaker 1] (2:55:40 - 2:56:16)

Yeah. And then, I didn't hear from Marianne Williamson for a few years, and I don't know how many years passed, and I had moved from London to Somerset in England, and one Sunday, in the Sunday paper, the front headline mentioned Marianne Williamson in big letters. I said, what is this?

What's she done? Do you remember that, when suddenly you got out into the world? I think it has something to do with Elizabeth Taylor.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:17 - 2:56:19)

Oh, I thought you were going to say my first book.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:19 - 2:56:26)

No, that wouldn't be in the front page of the News of the World.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:27 - 2:56:29)

I remember in the London Times, in my picture.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:30 - 2:56:48)

Suddenly, and then the book came out soon after that, and that first book was Return to Love. Wonderful book. I'm sure many of you have read it, and millions of people, I'm sure, have been helped and are continuing to be helped by it.

[Speaker 9] (2:56:49 - 2:56:49)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:56:50 - 2:56:59)

And then, of course, many more books came after that, and the most recent book, which I haven't read yet, I was very surprised.

[Speaker 2] (2:56:59 - 2:57:02)

You shouldn't read it, because it might have an effect on you that one wouldn't wish for it to have.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:03 - 2:57:27)

It's about weight loss. That's right. So, it's a book about the spiritual aspects of weight loss.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:27 - 2:59:58)

And it, of course, is an extension of the conversation we've been having that the epidemic, I don't know how much Canada is experiencing, but certainly south of here in the United States, we have a very serious problem here. And, of course, that stems from exactly, you know, as the Course in Miracles says, you think you have many different problems, but you really only have one, and that is your separation from God. So, the answer is that the answer with a capital A, no matter what the form of is.

But this idea that when we identify too much with the body, our dense thinking about the body actually is an erroneous perception of the body, which produces dis-ease and dysfunction related to the body. And it is when we see the body as merely a container

for light, having been thus reminded in consciousness, it returns the cells themselves to their native intelligence. So, there are cells in our body that know how to keep the lungs breathing and the heart beating, and that same perfection, because we are a perfect idea in the mind of God, that perfect imprint is expressed in every aspect of ourselves.

But for people who are dealing with a serious compulsion or even addiction in regards to physical weight, it's like a breaker switch has gone off. And we are, as the Course in Miracles would say, temporarily inaccessible to the power of the atonement in this one area where the perfect appetites are no longer operative. The cells of the nervous system, the cells in the brain, have literally been knocked out of their native knowing.

And so, knowing that everything that you talk about is the answer, no matter what the problem, achieving that pure state of consciousness that you speak of, literally takes pressure off the body and gives the body an opportunity to heal. The Course in Miracles says the body heals when we're not looking at it. And that all disease or dysfunction of the body arises from over-identification with the body.

So, this book, of course, in Weight Loss and Spiritual Lessons in Surrendering Weight, is taking this spiritual inquiry and applying it specifically to the issue of problems with one's body and weight.

[Speaker 1] (2:59:59 - 3:00:04)

And that could, of course, apply to other forms of addiction also.

[Speaker 2] (3:00:04 - 3:02:04)

Absolutely correct. It just seems to me that when it comes to drugs and alcohol, it is part of the mainstream conversation, whether someone has gone to a 12-step meeting or not, it is part of a mainstream understanding that it is a spiritual disease that needs a spiritual solution. I mean, that's kind of in part of the cultural jargon about the 12-step.

And even though Overeaters Anonymous exists and is a fine program, it doesn't seem to me that the issue of the spiritual problem and the spiritual answer has quite saturated the popular conversation about weight yet. It tends to be more on the level of effect diets and exercise. And they could be great diets that absolutely work, and great exercise programs that absolutely work.

The deeper problem is our inability to stay on the diet, or sometimes so painfully for people, the diet did work, the exercise did work, but within a certain amount of time, the subconscious force of the addiction or compulsion just comes right back. So, there's only one truth spoken many different ways, and I don't think any of this is so much something that we don't already know by now. You know, that path towards the 51%, and you're a large part of this.

You know, the Course in Miracles says, enlightenment begins as an abstract intellectual construct, and it makes its journey without distance. So, I believe enough of us actually, for a tipping point, get it intellectually. You know, we've all read the same books by now.

We've all listened to the same tapes. So, in a way, and you're a perfect example of this, someone didn't come here today so much to hear something they didn't already know. People are here to access more deeply those things which by now we do already know.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:05 - 3:02:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:06 - 3:02:09)

And the era of data collection is over, I think.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:10 - 3:02:11)

That's a good saying.

[Speaker 2] (3:02:11 - 3:02:27)

I have to remember to quote you. And I think you are one of the few on the planet, I'm not saying this to pander, one gets more than information, one gets a transmission listening to you, and it's truly an honor to be in your presence and to learn from you. Thank you.

[Speaker 9] (3:02:27 - 3:02:28)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:02:34 - 3:04:04)

I'd just like to ask one question, your view on, because I'm often asked that question, and I'll tell you my general perception. It's, I know you were very much supported President Obama during the elections, and often people ask me, how do you feel now about President Obama? And I still have to say the underlying state of consciousness that he represents is so vastly more awakened than what preceded him and what surrounds him.

That still applies. I still have a feeling that there's an underlying state of consciousness that is more evolved than what we've seen before and what is around him. On the level of form, which does not mean that he is free of mistakes, and I, from the beginning I thought, why cannot he see that Afghanistan is not going to work, but I hope I'm wrong.

How do you see it now after a couple of years, him in relation to the country as a whole and the world as a whole? What is his function? Is he being dragged down, or is he still

able to, in your view, to remain conscious while dealing with all these unconscious forces?

[Speaker 2] (3:04:07 - 3:05:38)

I don't want to have a codependent relationship with Barack Obama. I don't want to always be basing my views on what his potential is. He's responsible for his actions.

I passionately supported the president, and the way his administration has unfolded, I have come to believe that you simply cannot put new wine in old bottles. And in the United States, the Democratic and Republican Party have a lock on the narrative. Mm-hmm.

And within that conversation, I have begun to doubt whether or not the kind of profound transformational shifts that we were led to believe the president believed in during the campaign can occur. Mm-hmm. I'm disappointed.

And as a woman, I think that's part of what we learn in relationships. At a certain point, what you do is what matters, not what you say or what I think in your heart you really believe. He's an adult.

[Speaker 1] (3:05:39 - 3:05:48)

Yes. Of course, your expression was the Democrats and the Republicans have something about the narrative.

[Speaker 2] (3:05:48 - 3:08:50)

There's a lock on the narrative. And that goes back to what you and I were saying earlier about the state of humanity, the state of everywhere. And this is not just in the United States.

This is really Western civilization and actually global civilization to some extent. You see it everywhere, this new conversation bubbling up. You see it in education, you see it in the arts, you see it in politics, you see it in spirituality.

In politics, it's an old conversation. It doesn't allow for the bubbling up of this spiritual renaissance that is trying to occur. And it's too powerful a segment of our collective expression of power to be ignored.

And therefore, and yet for me as an American looking at this last election where, well, not this very last one, but before where the Democrats got the House, the Senate, the White House. See, I'm of a generation that still remembers a great moral force at the center of the Democratic Party in the United States. I remember Bobby Kennedy and I remember Martin Luther King.

And the way I see it, we're now living at a time where one major political party in the United States sees the desperate amount of human suffering on the planet. And they say, well, it's really sad, but it's not government's job to fix it. And if the private sector does something about it, that's great.

The other major political party, which I grew up believing saw addressing that suffering, the suffering of the oppressed, the injustice that so many people endure as the core of its reason for being there, now has become, at least in its current behavioral patterns, a party that looks at all that suffering, does what it can to ameliorate it on the periphery, but if we are honest with ourselves, is not fundamentally addressing the underlying causes that make all that suffering inevitable.

And I don't know how the Canadian system works, but in the United States, our first president, George Washington, warned us about political parties. There's nothing in the Constitution. So in the United States, third-party involvement has been extremely important.

Abolition came from the abolitionist party. Women's suffrage came from the suffrage party. Social security came from the socialist party.

So it is, as they say in AA, it is about principle, not personality. I don't care how cool that personality is. Something is rotten and it's not being fixed.

And I'm a mother and I'm too concerned about our planet and my country and all of our great-grandchildren to be willing to act patient when patience is perhaps not the virtue that it might appear to be.

[Speaker 1] (3:08:50 - 3:09:20)

Yes, so there is a rising new consciousness, but some structures that have been around for a long time, egoically created by the collective ego, some structures cannot perhaps be reached sufficiently by the rising new consciousness for them to change, to become instruments for change. And that might also apply to many economic structures, banking and so on.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:20 - 3:09:30)

Absolutely. And that is the question where we are right now. And for myself personally, I'm new wine.

Yes, you can't be put in those old bottles.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:31 - 3:09:32)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:09:32 - 3:09:35)

And that's how form was never meant to be permanent.

[Speaker 1] (3:09:35 - 3:10:08)

Oh, no. And especially at this time, as there's an enormous power behind the arising of the new consciousness. And already we saw how the monolithic structure of Soviet communism collapsed because it was so rigid, nothing new could reach it.

And so what then is really, we are destined to see is the eventual collapse of those structures in this transformational period on the planet, that those structures that cannot be reached, they will, they cannot survive.

[Speaker 2] (3:10:09 - 3:10:46)

And then it takes us back to the concern about human suffering. You're right, they'll fall. But do they fall through tender care and careful midwifing?

Or do they fall chaotically and with harm that might not have been there had the new not been midwifed more consciously? That seems to me to be the right conversation. And then every individual has to ask for themselves, what part do I play both conceptually and in terms of our behavior?

[Speaker 1] (3:10:46 - 3:11:37)

Yes. And just coming just a little bit, your own evolutionary journey as you, The Course in Miracles was a decisive transformation for you when you discovered that. So that was the beginning of your, for most people, awakening is a process, the awakening process, I call it.

And so this has been going on for you for since you discovered The Course in Miracles, whenever it was 30 years ago. And how do you feel in your present evolutionary process here? Peace is arising more and more in your life?

[Speaker 2] (3:11:38 - 3:11:49)

I had this question that was like a boulder in the road for me. And I think you answered it for me today.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:49 - 3:11:50)

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:50 - 3:11:53)

So I'm feeling quite grateful.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:53 - 3:11:53)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:11:54 - 3:11:57)

Thank you. Good. Good.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:59 - 3:12:09)

Thank you. Marianne has a weekly class if anybody's in LA. Where?

[Speaker 2] (3:12:10 - 3:12:21)

At a place called the Regent Theater right now that might be moving at some point. So if someone looks at my website, www.marianne.com, the information is there.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:22 - 3:12:28)

Yeah. Weekly class and you discuss, you talk about a lesson in The Course in Miracles, usually how to apply it.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:28 - 3:12:36)

Or some situation in life with the perspective. Like you, Eckhart, I try my best to listen and whatever. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:36 - 3:12:41)

And I am going to read your book anyway, The Weight Loss Book.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:41 - 3:12:46)

Thank you. Just don't do the lessons, okay?

[Speaker 1] (3:12:48 - 3:12:50)

Maybe you shouldn't do it either.

[Speaker 2] (3:12:50 - 3:12:52)

Well, I did them. That was kind of the point.

[Speaker 1] (3:12:57 - 3:13:04)

Marianne doesn't seem to have aged because I remember seeing photos of her from 20 years ago and she looked exactly the same then as she does now.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:04 - 3:13:05)

Well, my clothes are on.

[Speaker 1] (3:13:13 - 3:13:55)

Well, it's been just wonderful to sit with you and you've brought The Course in Miracles perhaps to so many people who otherwise would not have been open to it. And I think, I'm sure for many others, they took it from you rather than going to The Course because you've kind of, in some ways you have translated The Course in Miracles to make it more accessible to people.

[Speaker 2] (3:13:56 - 3:14:15)

I'm like the Russian literature professor. I'm not Dostoevsky. So I think, I always look at my book, A Return to Love, I see it as like the cliff notes of A Course in Miracles.

But obviously, you don't just attend the Russian lit class, you read the Russian novel.

[Speaker 1] (3:14:15 - 3:15:13)

I used for about two or three years, I used The Course in Miracles as a teaching device also in small seminars and workshops. So I still love it and picked it up again last night because I knew we were going to meet here today. And it's just, it's always fresh and new and every line is inspiring.

It's not for everybody, as you know, and as The Course in Miracles itself says. No, it's only one version of the universal curriculum, which is, as in the words of The Course in Miracles, the universal curriculum is the evolutionary path for all human beings, which is the same. And there are different versions of it and The Course in Miracles is one.

So if it's for you, you will know it probably when you pick it up and start reading it. And if it's not, that's fine.

[Speaker 2] (3:15:13 - 3:15:28)

I think it's so beautiful. One of the ways you can tell something is true, with a capital T, is if it dovetails with everything else you know is true. That's what's so beautiful about the multifaceted nature of the universal curriculum.

[Speaker 1] (3:15:28 - 3:17:20)

Yes, it's a wonderful thing being able to recognize the truth, the essential truth, no matter in what form it appears. I couldn't do that until this inner transformation occurred in me. Before that, I could only see the differences in the different teachings.

They looked so different. There's the Christian teaching and there's the Buddhist and Hindu and then other Course in Miracles. I wasn't able to see that they're all one.

And after the awakening that I experienced, I still remember picking up an old copy of the New Testament at my mother's place. I was visiting my mother and there was an old copy, New Testament, which the Jehovah's Witnesses had given her, although she didn't want it. But it was there waiting for me.

And so I picked it up and I suddenly saw the deeper truth that's in the, although some of it has come down to us in a distorted way, but even beyond, I could still see the power behind the teaching and the deeper truth to which it pointed. And then a little later, I saw the Bhagavad Gita and the same, this all points to the same fundamental truth that's there. And then there's an inner recognition that says, yes.

And of course, whatever it says, you know it already, although you might not have been able to formulate it, but then you see it reflected. The same listening to a teacher who teaches from that deep place of realization. Immediately, I still love listening to other spiritual teachers when it's teaching that truly comes from that deep place because it's such joy to listen to it in somewhat different form, the same truth.

[Speaker 2] (3:17:20 - 3:18:01)

Universal spiritual themes is the I was giving a talk in New York City with Robert Thurman, Professor Thurman, who is really the foremost North American Tibetan Buddhist, right? And so he was, it was on Buddha and Christ from the Course in Miracles perspective. And so he was going to talk about Buddha and then I was going to talk about Christ as in the context of A Course in Miracles.

So he spoke and then they said, okay, Marianne, tell us now about Christ. I said, everything he just said. It's been called a Christian Vedanta, actually, by the man who scribed it.

Yes. Bill Thetford said that of A Course in Miracles.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:02 - 3:18:05)

Christian Vedanta. Oh, that's interesting. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:18:05 - 3:18:08)

And here's the Jew. So, you know, it's all one.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:09 - 3:18:19)

Yes. And other forms of Christian teachings that not the conventional Christian teachings. Do you have you, do you know Joel Goldsmith?

[Speaker 2] (3:18:19 - 3:18:50)

Of course, Joel Goldsmith. And I think a lot of what Elaine Pagels wrote about in about the Nag Hammadi manuscripts and the Gnostic Gospels, there's more and more of an understanding that A Course in Miracles belongs in a broader category of the Gnostic mystical Christian tradition, which it's kind of interesting because you look at A Course in Miracles and then you look at a lot of traditional Christian interpretation and you see 80 percent's the same.

And then, boy, where it deviates 20 percent is huge.

[Speaker 1] (3:18:50 - 3:19:32)

Yes. Yes. Joel Goldsmith, to me, is the really a Christian version of what in India is called Advaita, which means non-duality teaching because he uses Christian terminology, but it all points to the absolute non-duality of life.

And Advaita teachings have become very popular in the West in the last few years. There's only one, there's only God and it's the oneness of all life. And to some extent, the A Course in Miracles is also pointing continuously to oneness.

[Speaker 2] (3:19:33 - 3:19:47)

Oh, absolutely. Sure, because nothing else exists. Yes.

If you're, God is all and what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. So when you're thinking without love, which is God, you're actually not thinking, you're hallucinating. Yes.

Which, once again, is like Buddhism. It's all Maya, it's all illusion. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (3:19:48 - 3:20:31)

The one obstacle that is common for people is that I've seen it with people who are drawn to Advaita teachings, the Indian non-duality. They begin to believe, they believe that the belief in non-duality is the realization of non-duality. And then they stop there.

And so there are people who teach Advaita, they have become maybe even quite well-known teachers, and they teach from intellectual level. They have mastered the terminology of non-duality and they can answer any questions by applying the terminology of non-duality. And it sounds quite convincing.

[Speaker 2] (3:20:31 - 3:20:34)

But it hasn't trickled down from their head.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:34 - 3:20:34)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 2] (3:20:34 - 3:20:36)

They're still triggered when their mother calls.

[Speaker 1] (3:20:36 - 3:21:04)

That's exactly it. Exactly. And so, very good.

And so a good criterion you can have is after you've listened to it, it doesn't feel good in here. Something in here tells you that's not it. You can feel it here.

There are some Advaita teachers who have realized, and then it's true teaching. But if it's only an intellectual realization, basically it's a fallacy.

[Speaker 2] (3:21:05 - 3:21:18)

You passed the test. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 1] (3:21:19 - 3:21:27)

Thank you, Marianne. Maybe just a little moment of stillness.

[Speaker 5] (3:21:27 - 3:24:37)

I understand there's probably only one answer to this question, like so many that will be asked. How can a movement that is so inwardly focused demonstrate political power in the same way that some corporate interests and evangelical interests have done so, I think much to the detriment of our political process?

[Speaker 1] (3:24:37 - 3:24:41)

I didn't quite understand. Can you just repeat again?

[Speaker 5] (3:24:41 - 3:24:54)

How can an inwardly focused movement demonstrate political power to beneficial effect instead of the detriment of our nations?

[Speaker 1] (3:24:54 - 3:24:57)

Thank you. This is a question for Marianne.

[Speaker 2] (3:25:01 - 3:28:49)

How did the Indians get the British to leave? What was Gandhi's movement of nonviolence if not an inwardly focused movement? Martin Luther King went to India.

He studied the principles of nonviolence, and he brought those principles back for

application in the civil rights movement, struggle for civil rights in the United States during the 1960s. Please forgive me for some level of ignorance about Canada's history, but most of our countries have had pretty much the same trajectories of places where there were levels of injustice that moved to justice. If you looked at the abolitionist movement in the United States, all the power, when you were just talking about the corporate power, the abolitionists didn't even have cell phones.

They had no computers. They had no way of connecting. The economic power behind slavery, the institution of slavery in the United States, in the southern states of the United States at that time, was the equivalent of corporate power today.

But they had a better idea. They had what was ultimately a more life-sustaining idea. That's the power of that line that Martin Luther King used to quote, that the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

Because ultimately, if you stand on something which is life-sustaining, freedom and liberty and fairness for life and all its forms, then you have what Martin Luther King called cosmic companionship. This is what is the symbol of the Christ child in front of the three kings. They bowed to him.

When you are in the presence, ultimately, no amount of money, no amount of corporate power, no amount of governmental power, none of those external powers, which are false anyway, will ultimately stand for all the reasons we were talking about earlier. They are powers of an illusionary world. And when we recognize, as Martin Luther King said, there is a power in us more powerful than the presence of bullets, in the presence that Eckhart so eloquently describes, as there is a collective field of presence, which is what the Indian non-violent movement was.

It was a collective field of presence led by Gandhi. A collective field of presence led by Martin Luther King in the United States. Then ultimately, all powers of form will fall in the presence of light.

The Course in Miracles defines light as understanding, and in the presence of light, darkness cannot be. And also, the Course in Miracles says faith. There is no such thing as a faithless person.

Faith is an aspect of consciousness. But we tend to have more faith in the power of the disaster than we have faith in the power of presence. We have too much faith in corporate power.

We need to have more faith in the power of presence, the power of love, which is not saying that all corporate power is bad, by the way, but corporate dominance. So I think sometimes political activists today are disturbed by an ignorance of history. Because if you want to see political miracles, we've already had them.

From suffrage to the abolition of slavery, to many examples. It's not like, well, it's never happened. Thank you.

[Speaker 10] (3:28:49 - 3:28:50)

Thank you.

[Speaker 8] (3:29:08 - 3:29:47)

I have a question about ignorance. I find myself to become quite ignorant. I have compassion and love and come from that place, but I don't seem to respond to what's happening around me so much because I understand it's an illusion.

And every time I see it, I just feel it is an illusion and it's okay for what it is. But now listening to you, I'm thinking maybe I should go back and be more active and participate. I used to be that way, but now I'm more like, it is what it is.

[Speaker 1] (3:29:50 - 3:35:11)

Well, I'll say a few words and then... Well, in any situation, prior to any action, the main factor is your state of consciousness. And any action you take arises out of a state of consciousness.

If you see something that maybe suffering is being inflicted on another human being, it would be a misunderstanding of what spirituality is to say, well, this is just another illusion. So on the other hand, if you take whatever you see out in the world to be an absolute reality and nothing else, then you get lost in trying to solve the problems of the world on the level of effect. So that is the danger of people who are activists or try to help and do things.

There is a place for this one dimension that is the level of effect where you can take action and do things. But at the same time, you need to be aware of the level of cause where the causal level of human suffering and unconsciousness and the causal level of human suffering is in state of consciousness and it starts with your own. Are you connected to the deeper level of who you are?

That's what we always address here. Are you connected with that? Or if you are connected with that, then what your mind calls illusion, then you truly know that this is not ultimate reality and yet it has a relative reality.

And you can take action and at the same time be connected with a deep inherent peace, an energy field of peace. The action that you then take, spontaneous action, is imbued with that peace. And if you don't know who you are, then you're trying to solve the problems of the world exclusively on the level of form and they cannot be solved on the level of form.

The level of form is an addition, an added thing that comes. Your state of consciousness is the primary factor in any action you take. Now, one needs to be careful with teachings that say it's all illusion, not that it is not true, but like Advaita teachings or Course in Miracle teachings, all illusion.

On what level do you know that? Is that just a belief in your mind that tells you, oh, it's all illusion? You don't really know that.

It's actually not true as far as you are concerned. As Marianne said, you still get, when you visit your mother-in-law or whatever, you still get triggered by whoever your mother or your mother-in-law or whoever it is. And to say then, well, it's all illusion, well, you don't actually, you don't seem to know that your mother-in-law is illusion because you react as if she were absolutely real.

So they don't really know it. Whether you know that, truly know that it's illusion is determined by your state of consciousness. So when the deep peace is lacking, then you don't really know it in the depths of your being.

You only know it intellectually. And if you only know intellectually that it's all illusion, that's not the truth. You're fooling yourself that it needs to be a living truth inside you.

Then it becomes true for you. So really it's only spiritual teachers who have reached that place, they say it, and they are absolutely right when they say it. And then somebody repeats it who just hears those words and then thinks that's the solution to the world.

It's not. It's a lie when you just repeat it for as far as you are concerned, because you haven't gone to that place where you truly know it. So that is your primary responsibility is going to that place where you know at the deepest level.

And then you can be of benefit in this world because then any action you take is connected to a deeper level. And there's more than just the action you take. There's an entire energy field behind it that is that that changes the world.

And so the difference then between head knowledge and lived living knowledge.

[Speaker 2] (3:35:13 - 3:38:30)

There are monasteries, both Western and Eastern, both in the Eastern religions as well as Western orientations, where people just live in silence, monks in silence. They are probably doing as much to keep this world from blowing up in a nuclear catastrophe as is anyone. So what someone is, quote unquote, doing is on the outside does not even say, because just as Eckhart was just saying, if someone is acting in the realm of form, but they're bringing the old consciousness, they're actually recreating the old no matter what they're doing.

And similarly, people who are, quote unquote, doing nothing, but they're praying all day for all living things are doing plenty. When books like The Course in Miracles say the world is an illusion or I need do nothing as Eckhart was just saying, this is extremely important. When you hear these lines out of context, that is a profound misunderstanding of A Course in Miracles or any serious spiritual teaching to think that the conversation stops there.

Because The Course in Miracles says we are to do whatever we are sent out to do. Now, I would never presume to know you might be in a phase where a doing of nothingness was necessary for a part of your own purification of consciousness. And just as true as that might be that you were meant to be here today to hear talk about a quickening.

If you're only acting on the world of form and not addressing causal issues, then you are only creating more of a problem. But if, just as Eckhart already said all this, if you're only dealing on the realm of cause, you're not like those monks praying for the world. You're just using it's all an illusion anyway, so I don't have to do anything as an excuse.

You're also perpetuating the problem. So it's both and. I want to tell you one quote from Martin Luther King Jr. He said, you have very little morally persuasive power with people who can feel your underlying contempt. So that's the spiritual activist's creed. Dear God, I want to yell and scream at this person on television. I can't stand them.

And you come to understand that your own self-righteousness, your own spiritual superiority, your own sense that you know and they don't know is the problem. So first you pray, please help me get rid of my own craziness. The Course in Miracles says the primary work of the miracle worker is to accept the atonement for himself.

Dear God, I really believe I'm better than they are, smarter than they are. And if only they were gone, the country would be fine. Dear God, heal me.

Right? But then the issue is when you're flat on that, you won't feel moved to just sit there. You will, when and to the extent to which it is your assignment, do that which you are called to do if you are called to do it.

But just as Eckhart was saying, you will do it from a different place. So the answer is both and, isn't it?

[Speaker 8] (3:38:31 - 3:39:17)

Everything seems to be always is one thing yet is another. It seems that actually it's really funny because you say something but the opposite is truth as well. So it kind of contradicts everything in life, contradicts itself.

Give us an example. Yes, I can be out there active and fight and that would be great and it will be beneficial for the energy of this planet and mine. Yet, if I don't and just sit in

peace and love and just be still, it's the same.

No, if you go out there and you fight, you will only be temporarily managing an effect.

[Speaker 2] (3:39:17 - 3:40:37)

It will only be an allopathic suppression of the symptoms. The issue is how much time did you spend in the presence that morning? Did you meditate and prepare inwardly before you went?

And then if you went, you might have gone to the rally but you wouldn't be coming to fight. You would be coming to be the presence in the midst of this chaos. You would come in a whole different way and that is what the world needs now.

These are illusions but there's a part in the Course in Miracles where it talks about how you could take a spiritual teaching, you could take the power of now. It's a book, it's a form, it's an illusion but it's an illusion that leads beyond illusion. So the Course in Miracles talks about the highest level of thinking of which the ego is capable.

It's still the ego's world, we're bodies, we're talking but it's the highest level of thinking of ego which ultimately will lead us. So I think it's both and. You pray, you meditate, then you show up if you feel moved to show up but you will show up emanating something much more profound and causal than just, well man, I'm angry.

Which means you're just part of the problem. You're as much a hawk as they are.

[Speaker 1] (3:40:39 - 3:43:52)

Or take an example, let's say very often whenever humans come together in institutions and companies they sit, the enormous amount of conflict that's generated, let's say there's a committee meeting, there's conflict, I mean not only where you might expect conflict in the big financial institutions, there's the same amount of conflict when egos come together in hospital administrations, churches, church administration and so on. So let's say you are there at a committee meeting where everybody is energized egoically and in other words it's quite insane and your job is to embody, before you even think of what you are going to say or what you want prior to all that, your job is to embody a different state of consciousness as you sit there.

That comes first. It doesn't, what you want to happen or your point of view is you can forget for the time being. First is what is my state of consciousness?

Are you there as another agitated and egoic presence and saying things should be done the spiritual way? I totally disagree with everybody. Or do you embody the presence and then you sit there and you begin to listen to all the people discussing things without saying oh you're all so ignorant.

You should be, without the judgments of the mind, you simply watch and you're there as a still alert presence and you watch and then you may find at some point words may come out of your mouth and you say something. It will be totally different energy from the energy that these people are putting out but it's not that you are saying now I'm going to show you the right energy. No it doesn't.

It comes out of presence. Words that come out of presence are not, they don't generate more confrontation and human unconsciousness and it may well be that suddenly people listen but that's the result. You're not attached to the result and you cannot predict what will come out of your mouth.

Maybe nothing will come out of your mouth and you will just be there and perhaps the very fact that there's one human being who holds the presence might change what these people say or do in the room. It could happen. It doesn't matter but that your primary responsibility is embodying a different state of consciousness.

Whether action comes out of that, words come out of that is secondary. So that's that really is we've all had experiences of how dysfunctional these all these places are where egos come together. Where egos come together it cannot not be dysfunctional.

[Speaker 2] (3:43:53 - 3:45:32)

Now this is it you know the whole these inquiries are so endlessly fascinating because once you're on that level of pure consciousness or reality with a capital R you are in the realm where there is no time or space. So when you are in that meeting of the hospital administration in Vancouver and you go into pure consciousness which by the way cannot but affect the people in the room in ways that you will never know there could be a suicide bomber somewhere who says I'm not going to do it. Literally there could be a soldier somewhere who says I'm putting my gun down.

So once we're in that realm of pure consciousness we're in the one mind that's the esoteric meaning of the line there is only one begotten son means we're all it. So it is not just as you were saying which is well if where you find yourself is the hospital administration meeting that's your assignment today. But it's also that place where spirituality intersects spiritual practice intersecting global activism because you actually are affecting the entire globe and contributing to that 51 percent.

But also affecting you have no idea where this might be. We know that when the butterfly flaps its wings in this southern tip of the planet that it affects the wind currents at the North Pole. We know that this is the same on the level of consciousness.

So you are working on the world if you're working on yourself deeply.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:33 - 3:45:58)

Yes and you're very powerful in that sense you are very powerful the power the wonderful quote that you're what's the most famous quote from Marianne which is usually attributed to Nelson Mandela but it's actually by Marianne which is our deep it's from it's from a return to love of course it's of

[Speaker 2] (3:45:58 - 3:46:12)

course content our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure it is our light not our darkness that most frightens us that yes of course and then I'm the only person I know doesn't have the rest of it memorized

[Speaker 1] (3:46:16 - 3:46:30)

it's lovely thank you now I believe that did you say Marianne needs to go soon yeah so let's thank her for being here a wonderful valuable incredible additional thank you

[Speaker 2] (3:46:31 - 3:46:37)

thank you thank you great honor great honor god bless you

[Speaker 1] (3:46:51 - 3:59:56)

now here we have another question another person who is dissatisfied for another reason I'm on a path of awakening but my deep loneliness at loneliness at not having a life partner is an obstacle to my spiritual development I get deeply depressed though I do my best to stay present in the now instead of dwelling on my longing what advice could you offer okay well I won't say internet dating um there is a part in every person the form you the the form identity of who you are and the level of form tends either towards the male or the female it might not necessarily be the physical the physical male may tend more to hit the other so it doesn't necessarily depend on your the physical form but you tend to pretend either to towards the male or the female and therefore you're not complete because you're only one half on the level of form which is the physical form or the just underneath that the the psychological or emotional form and so there is a natural longing for the other polarity the completeness in a human being and you can feel that as a sex is only part of that but it goes beyond sexual longing it's there's more to it than that there's also an emotional longing for the other and you can so they come they go together and there's that pull that you can feel as on the level of form and when that is not satisfied then that can lead to unhappiness particularly if you have not transcended at all your identification with form if you are still totally totally identified with you as this physical form and psychological form the transcendent dimension has not come into your life at all then you would become very dissatisfied and depending also to some extent what culture you live in there are traditional cultures still on our planet where it's almost whether you have to find a

partner and if you're not everybody would look down on you as being a total and miserable failure in some traditional cultures if you if you're not married at a certain by a certain age or you cannot give birth to children people look down on you and despise you and you're miserable for the rest of your life you have not fulfilled your form identity and and so and also in some traditional cultures the the sense of self is very strongly bound up with whether you're a man or a woman so more so than in the west it still persists to some extent in the west but much less so than in some traditional cultures where if you're a man in certain cultures you are this because 70 percent of who you feel you are your self-identity is the male you are the male and you look at every woman as a as a that's a female you can't relate to a human to a woman as a human being you are the male and she is a female and she of course not your equal and the woman is totally identified with being the female form and behaves according to that kind of collective conditioning so depending on where it is i won't act it out but here in the west it's a little easier to step out of those collective expectations it is more acceptable in the west to say my choice is not to get married and you can even say my choice is not to have children and people say okay so there's a bit more freedom there and yet the longing for the other on the form level is still there emotional sexual the essence is to be able to transcend who you are on the level of form whether or not you find a partner that meets that longing or whether you go from one partner to another and another or you find one life partner with whom you're for the rest of your life that is secondary really because even if you have a partner if you have not gone deeper and and encounter the transcendent dimension to who you are beyond the form identity of you as the male or the female or whatever the nationality or the particular status in society whatever makes up your form identity in addition to gender if you haven't gone beyond that then even the relationships yes you might have found your partner but you won't be satisfied in the relationship with in the absence of the transcendent dimension the spiritual dimension you may come to some kind of compromise and living together somehow managing to stay together but it you'll be actually you have a longing to get out so the people who are who are outside the relationships have a longing to get in or marriage and those who are in have a longing to get out so the young the young the young girl or man late teens early twenties they want to get into the cage and those who are in the cage want to get out of the cage it is quite possible to notice the sense of if in in the absence of a partner it is quite possible to notice a certain sense of lack on the level of form and yet have a lot of spaciousness around that sense of lack yes i can feel that there is a longing but the longing does not consume you the longing has not taken possession of you and making you into an unhappy person a totally unfulfilled and bitter person perhaps no the longing is there but the longing that arises from your particular form of you exists within a spaciousness because that is the transcendent dimension and who you are is not the unfulfilled longing who you are is the presence or the stillness around it that is the shift so the longing may persist but you can live with it however if you are no longer trapped in the longing it's also quite possible that a change will come into your life particularly if the intense neediness goes i need somebody and then

everybody you everybody you meet can feel the the neediness and you're when you when you've given somebody your phone number you've just met and then you're waiting for them to call and they they're less likely to call when the neediness is there they're more likely to call when a certain spaciousness is there i'd like i'd love you to call i'd love this person to call me but he may or she may or may not and there's a again a spaciousness around it so you of course you can take action towards meeting somebody i don't know the question whether the questioner has taken any action and actually gone to places perhaps where one meets people are not necessarily nightclubs we might not meet the most conscious people in bars but there are other places one can go to where you meet people and even the internet why not this is the way many people read that way but even there if you haven't gone beyond the then the absolute neediness of needing somebody then it's less likely to work out for you but if you have that sense of inner some inner spaciousness around the longing then the way in which you approach others changes without that absolute that pull so that's my suggestion then is see if you can on the outer level see how and where you could meet people and explore perhaps you will find somebody here or there why to realize that the transcendence is the most vital thing does not exclude the possibility of taking action on an outer level of course that is always secondary but why not and maybe you find a good website where you meet conscious is there such a thing conscious dating if there isn't maybe it's a business idea conscious dating of course the the difficulty is a person who thinks of themselves as conscious maybe deluded so find that place where the polarities actually don't are not there anymore in the being the I am-ness that's deeper than the form and go there as much as you can it may not totally free you of the longing but that's okay the longing will just become a thing that's no longer overwhelming and then if take action and see what happens

[Speaker 7] (4:00:17 - 4:01:17)

Hi Eckhart, I just want to thank your consciousness for your teachings Thank you very much. Did I say it right this time?

I strive to be a role model of presence for my two-year-old son Teddy but if I send him to preschool he may be influenced by unconscious teachers and other adults there who do not know about your teachings my instinct tells me to homeschool him until he can reach a certain level of consciousness if my son was your child what would you do and my second question is this millions of parents teachers grandparents parents educators are crying out for a roadmap for applying your teachings can you please create a lecture series and a book to help adults raise the consciousness of the next generation

[Speaker 1] (4:01:19 - 4:03:19)

thank you well the second question let's start with that first if that happens then that will happen I don't I don't start with an intention it's just when something wants to come

through it comes right now I feel that the consciousness is increasingly moving through human beings and quite a few teachers too that that thing will be created through them through consciousness moving through people who are already in the educational establishment and they will have experienced with that they know what's wrong with it and they will consciousness will use them to bring about what you are talking about maybe it'll use this form too we'll see so that I'm sure will happen I already know individual teachers who are bringing in consciousness it's not not part of the official curriculum but they are doing it it's happening so if this is how change usually starts it's from the bottom up not by imposing a new system from the top but the change starts from the bottom and then seeps up and then reaches the top until finally it becomes part of the curriculum in a few years we would love that hopefully we'll see and then your child when the what at what age would you would your child right now so because of your teachings

[Speaker 7] (4:03:19 - 4:04:17)

I'm able to be very aware of how I act with him and I'm you know soaking up this time to give him formless attention being the presence letting him play in the dirt and not label it having him use his senses and just be with the dirt and not care about if he gets dirty or not it's because of your teachings that my parenting philosophy has drastically changed and I don't meet a lot of educators out there that I I feel that could kind of give him that you know presence for him while he's soaking up pain bodies here and there I kind of want to be that foundation and so the only solution I can come up with is that I should home school him until he gets a little bit older and he's able to practice you know certain he has a certain level of consciousness

[Speaker 1] (4:04:17 - 4:08:23)

so I don't know if you have any other case it's not too good to send them to school to at too early an age so you also have to there are some types of schools that are better than others if such a school is in your vicinity where you live they Rudolf Steiner schools or Montessori or these alternative schools and some of those schools are aware that a child at an early age should not yet be burdened with too much conceptual knowledge or mathematics also and keep the child in touch with sensory reality they encourage that so if you can find a school like that a kind of alternative school that may be acceptable and then you have to look at what other if those are not where you live see what the schools are like there eventually the child will have to interact with other children I wouldn't send a child to school at such an early age in any case or even teach writing too soon sometimes these days it's taught far too soon if the school is not it's not alternative but not too bad because there are huge differences in levels of consciousness in schools then you may have to send him to school and then compensate for what he learns there to some extent at home the home environment is still very very important for a child and to some extent can compensate for what happens at school school is much harder to

compensate when the home environment is bad it's harder for the school to compensate for the bad home environment bad meaning unconscious than for home to compensate for relatively unconscious school environment so the home environment is more fundamental than the school but be careful and use your intuition and then you'll do the right thing you cannot protect your child too much from the unconsciousness of the world that this may be a temptation but sooner or later your child one way or another will come into contact with the unconsciousness if you prolong it for not extreme forms of unconsciousness but some forms of unconsciousness if you delay it for too long then it's like like keeping a plant in a in the hothouse for too long and then finally when you think okay well it's the plan is big enough to put outside now but it's never been outside and then it may struggle to survive outside the challenges of life and many of the challenges of life are challenges of unconsciousness in the world that we live in they are actually a vital part also of the awakening so many parents want to remove challenges to some extent it's a good thing to of course not to expose a child to damaging environments yes that's all good but you cannot remove all the challenges nor would that be a good thing so the child will grow in consciousness by encountering unconscious humans including unconscious children so of course you wouldn't want to send a child to a school where there's a lot of physical violence definitely not but milder forms of unconsciousness the child will come into contact with and at first it's yes it's a form of suffering but then he will grow in consciousness through that that generates more consciousness that's all right thank you so

[Speaker 6] (4:08:23 - 4:10:23)

much thank you i'm bringing on the mick jagger bruce springsteen and bono all rolled into one this is the guy now when you see him you're going to go really but he is the rock star of the spiritual movement he is the rock star eckhart tolle is the person who embodies and is literally walking presence so when i first read eckhart tolle's book a new earth everybody of course had read the power of now and i read a new earth new earth life changing i would have to say central most important book i ever read i mean if you never read any if you only want to read one book in your life i would say a new earth is it his teaching and his definition and understanding of ego turned the concept inside out for me and for a lot of other people who followed us on um those a new earth lessons uh we actually broke the web back in 2008 when we first did those 10 lessons of uh of a new earth his writings allowed us to understand for the first time actually didn't you guys what ego was because we always thought it meant just being arrogant so he calls his uh session the awakening of consciousness that's it that's what we're here to do the awakening of consciousness from the rock star himself eckhart tolle

[Speaker 1] (4:10:46 - 8:45:16)

nice to be here and now as you can see this speaker must be really dynamic they had to bring out a chair for him a few days ago a question that oprah likes to ask came to mind

uh i'm sure you've heard it then the question is what do you know for sure what do i know for sure she asked me that question a few years ago i don't remember what the answer was because it came out of the present moment but it's a very interesting question it can take you to a very deep level as it can be answered on many levels and what may be true on one level may not be true on a deeper level i prefer the word deeper to higher because higher kind of takes you out of yourself deeper takes you more deeply within so an example i could say what do you what do i know for sure i know for sure that i'm sitting on a chair that's the most surface level of things i know for sure that this is a table and of course on one level that is true if you take it to a deeper level if you really looked at these atomic and subatomic structure of this thing that i call chair and that i call table then you would realize maybe it's not a table on that level it's not a table it's atoms and molecules and 99 empty space in between so it's no longer a table it's true on this level but not on a deeper level and so you can go to many i can say what do i know i know for sure that my books have changed the lives of millions of people because people keep telling me that i assume that they are honest and that's true on one level but if you take it to a deeper level are they my books who am i where did these books come from am i the consciousness out of which these books came i what come what i what level of i so you can you can then deeper and deeper whether it's not me the person who wrote the books it's the consciousness that used this so-called person as an instrument and used the mind so you can go deeper and deeper and so as i was pondering this i finally arrived at the most the at the deepest answer that you cannot doubt what do i know for sure what do i know for sure and if you go to the deepest level because everything else can be questioned including whether us sitting here is actually absolutely real it seems to be but on the other hand tomorrow you might wake up and for a moment you might not know did i dream yesterday what happened that this wonderful spiritual gathering or did that actually happen or when you're desperate you remember many things and they suddenly your life seems to have a dream-like quality because things evaporate very quickly things arise situations and it's gone there are many dream-like qualities to a person's life and many philosophers has questioned they said is life a dream on some level one could say that it is nobody can prove that this event here you sitting here listening to this man on the chair that you are not dreaming this you could be or the one consciousness is dreaming it this is possible nobody can prove otherwise so i cannot know for sure yet that that we are actually here you are so it means you have to go deeper what if i can't be sure that this is actually happening what can i be sure of it's maybe a dream and then suddenly you arrive at something they arrive at the realization that in order for a dream even if it is a dream or reality for anything to be there needs to be a consciousness in which it appears so even if it's a dream the dream must appear in a consciousness without consciousness there is nothing there needs to be a light of consciousness for a dream to be experienced so even if it's a dream there is still a you that's experiencing the dream now that you may not be the personality you with a name and a personal history a limited personal history and a limited personal future but there is a there is a presence there in which if it is a dream or

reality in which this dream is being perceived becomes appears in the light of what it appears in consciousness there is an awareness in which the dream appears if it is a dream and now that now we have reached the deepest level of the question what do i know for sure what i know for sure and i speak for everyone is that at this moment i am conscious otherwise there would be nothing i must be conscious i may be dreaming but i'm i'm the dream is i'm conscious so that is the substratum to use a geological term for everything one could use certain analogies you could say it is like the canvas on which paintings appear the difference between in this analogy is this canvas that is you the consciousness is in the background for it enables everything to be and to appear and to arise and to subside to form and to go back into formlessness and the pictures that appears on this canvas is your entire life experience whatever happens to you the changing pictures on the canvas of your awareness and so the only difference between the actual the artist's canvas and this canvas is the pictures change constantly they're not static the one thing that's constant about your life is changed everything is in flux as the ancient greek philosophers already found you cannot step into the same river twice everything is subject to change that was the philosopher heraclitus or heraclitus 2,500 years ago he said eris panta rei is the greek term everything flows everything is in flux that was his main teaching heraclitus is a pre-socratic philosopher he was he taught before famous socrates but then there was another pre-socratic philosopher parmenides who said the exact opposite he said change is an illusion nothing ever changes and they are both right parmenides refers to the canvas and heraclitus refers to what appears on the canvas what appears on the canvas is your life situation you're the continuously changing life situation but who is experiencing that life that is sometimes fine sometimes not so fine sometimes disaster sometimes elation continuous change continuous changes what do i know for sure i know for sure that i am at this moment conscious this this is a first-hand realization you don't need secondary evidence you cannot even have secondary evidence that you are conscious now that even that is perhaps not absolutely correct when we use those words because when i say i am conscious that still implies that there is a duality that there is an i who has a certain quality that's called conscious to it there's a duality when you say i'm conscious so let's change that and say i am consciousness that is the essence of who i am presence consciousness now most people don't know that they are so hypnotized by what appears on the canvas of their awareness that everything that appears on this canvas of their awareness draws their attention incompletely there's all the things that happen around you all the time they draw your you can see how they draw your attention out continuously and want you to identify with go into them especially nowadays with all the devices that we have early in the morning first goes the first text message thing and then and then your attention goes to the next thing let's need to check the emails now this is why and then your attention what you have to do now and so it's not and then not only external things draw your attention continuously even more so the mind the thought every thought that arises absorbs your attention and you identify with it it goes so most people are so drawn into that that them all that exists is all the stuff that appears on that to continue

for a moment with that analogy all the stuff that appears on the screen of their awareness that hypnotizes them and so they are not aware of the essential background to their lives they are not aware of their essential beingness they are not aware of the essential I am I am is the most profound truth so what do I know for sure so the most profound and unquestionable answer is I am I know that for sure but don't add anything to it because that's temporary that's a temporary appearance on the screen of of the I am awareness now spiritual awakening or the awakening of consciousness because when you don't know that when you're hypnotized by everything that arises externally and internally in your mind well ultimately it's all internal because for anything for you to know anything it must arise within you so you need to be aware most people don't are not aware that that dimension exists in them so and that's a terrible one could almost say their life is deprived the most essential dimension is missing they don't they don't know the I am and the I am is an interesting thing that's used in different in different spiritual traditions God's definition of him her or itself is I am that I am Jesus is said or is supposed to have said nobody knows for sure of course because it went through so many people writing and translating I am the light of the world that's in the gospel of John and in another gospel he said you are the light of the world and both of course are correct so what is the light of what does he mean you are the light of the world that is his way if he had said you are consciousness people would have said what what but at least by using the light they have some analogy so perhaps they could get a little bit of a sense of what he was talking about now the important thing is as we sit here for you to come to this realization and many of you already are in touch with that dimension within themselves to actually realize at first hand what it means when you say I am and add nothing to it and then what follows the I am or you can use a little mantra that in especially the Indian sage Ramana Maharshi recommended highly he said sit down in meditation ask yourself the question who am I and so many people tried that and some succeeded and some didn't a little secret if you find an answer to who am I on a level of concepts then you didn't get it so on the level of concepts there is no answer to who am I the answer is wrong that's a bit of zen like thing they whatever answer you give is wrong because when you ask yourself who am I and do you need to enter a state of alertness almost as if you were listening this is just an analogy but the kind of alertness that you may you may be familiar with when you let's say you are in a room or outside someone you're trying to listen to a distant noise I gave an example of that in the new earth trying to listen to dissonance you need to be alert to so that you can hear it and that alertness is is a is is an aware presence without thinking it is just an an alert presence that goes who am I is meant to take you into that state of presence and that state of presence is the answer so there's no conceptual answer there's only the answer of experiencing yourself as pure presence and that is not difficult it's bit between two thoughts the gap between two thoughts is the I am presence you experience yourself as the canvas as the consciousness so here's one thought comes to an end the other one hasn't arisen yet and in between two thoughts for example now you have a moment of spaciousness and in that spaciousness you sit here and you just look around and you take everything in

and you come to the amazing realization that you do not always need to conceptualize interpret or label everything that comes into your awareness you can just be there as a pure presence and then that is another way of knowing things in our intellectualized mentally overstimulated civilization we believe that the only way of knowing things is to analyze and to conceptualize but that's only one way yes there is a place for it but if that's all you know let's take an example you go into a forest and you walk in the forest there's one way of perceiving the forest and that is looking interpreting what you see you know the name of that tree you know that bird or you ask why wonder what that's called on and so you label it you interpret it you might be very knowledgeable so you can explain to people what these things are how these plants grow how old that tree might be and so on and that's fine that's one way of knowing the forest but there's another way of knowing the forest and that is going through the forest with very little thought but just an alert presence and that is a very different way of experiencing the forest from the way of interpreting it so and in that way you would go and you notice your mind becomes very still and in that stillness you perceive everything but in addition to perceiving everything you are aware of an underlying presence and that underlying presence is both yourself at the most essential level beyond the egoic personality that is short-lived anyway there is the yourself as the conscious presence but then you can also sense a presence the presence of the forest that science could never reveal to you that the analytical knowledge could never reveal to you you become aware of the sacredness of the forest and you connect with whatever you're perceiving at a deep level you feel a connectedness with the trees and the plants and the totality of the forest in a way that you could never have experienced if your only way of knowing the forest had been the conceptualizing mind so and it is not necessarily the case that you need to be in either one or the other it is possible for us to be in the in both dimensions so that we are not obsessively interpreting when but we can occasionally interpret and then go back into alert stillness being the awareness in which all this arises then you feel a connectedness with everything that before you could not feel when you it only related to it through the conceptualizing mind because the conceptualizing mind brings up barriers between yourself and the other and the same thing applies to human beings when you meet a human being if you're not aware with a deeper dimension within yourself the essence dimension as i sometimes call it or your essence identity then you cannot be aware of the essence of another human being that you meet all you see then is the physical form that's often the first thing you see which either you find pleasing or not pleasing or it attracts you or it leaves you indifferent you like it or you don't like it and then as you start speaking to another person you interact on the mind level and the emotional level also and so you get the emotion mental emotional conditioning of that person and then you relate on that level to that person and immediately you interpret that person you have opinions about that person you have judgments about that person many people are very quick to judge the moment they meet somebody they've two minutes later they've formulated an opinion about you and i often find it difficult people sometimes ask me after i meet some what did you think of such of such and such a person that you met this

morning and i go nothing because i now if you ask me now i can start thinking and i can probably come up with something and tell you something in a few minutes but so far i had not formulated any thought about that just come just communicated with that person and i had no thoughts about that person i enjoyed the interaction but i have no particular opinion so the what we call the ability of humans to have empathy to have empathy not only for other human beings but also to have empathy for nature to have that sense of uh benevolence towards other life forms benevolence another word for which is goodwill or we could even be daring and say love not in the conventional sense but true love which is a sense of connectedness with another in order to sense that and it is vital for you to be a true human being you're not even truly human i would agree with confucius who said that 2500 years ago you're not fully human if you do not manifest those qualities of benevolence goodwill compassion towards others so you're still not it doesn't mean you're evil it means you haven't arrived yet at being fully human humanity of course is a work in progress and some some are lagging behind a little bit more than others and that doesn't make them evil you just have to see oh they're a little bit behind but make sure the ego doesn't get hold of that thought so humans are evolving and the vital thing is for the world that we inhabit to change is a shift in consciousness so that humans can relate to other humans and the deeper level of essence and not the conceptualizing judgmental mind because that operates not only on the personal level it also operates on the collective level on the collective level where people have collective egos political egos religious egos dreadful things as we all know are happening there and they cannot sense anymore that which unites them with others they cannot feel the other anymore as a living being they cannot sense the shared consciousness that you share with every life form with every human being with everything that exists ultimately there's a beautiful saying an ancient saying which goes consciousness sleeps in the stone meaning the mineral of the stone even that has a glimmer of consciousness but it's sleep consciousness dreams in the plant consciousness awakens in the animal and consciousness awakens to itself in the human and so that that is the awakening of consciousness that is the call also be called spiritual awakening that is happening to a certain segment percentage of population on the planet still a minority but that's fine so the essence of this awakening is to realize now i'm this is not an absolute truth it's a temporary way of putting it there are two of you there is the form identity of you with a personal history and a personal future and you do your best there it's good you'd have to do your best you learn things you improve your skills you experience things you have you travel you get a good job as good as you can improve yourself as a person good but not enough then there is the other you one could say the other half that is the formless you the formless and timeless essence of who you are that you need to know that as your ultimate self otherwise if you only know the form you the form identity life becomes very frustrating you never really get any any lasting peace or joy in your life because everything changes so quickly but whatever you achieve you for a moment gives you pleasure or annoyance and then either it's taken away or it dissolves or it no no longer gives you pleasure because you've had it for too long it's so

life becomes very frustrating if the deeper dimension is missing in your life and that is the formless knowing yourself as the essential i am and that is a sensing that is a the ability to just become still the ability to look at something or someone without imposing immediately conceptual thought on it or him or her the ability to become still i said in my book the stillness stillness speaks a little meditative book you're never more essentially yourself than when you are still you're never more essentially yourself than we are when you are still because when you are still you you are you can sense yourself as the awareness as the consciousness and it has no qualities as such you you cannot make it into an object of knowledge and say ah there it is you can you but you can sense there is a presence that presence you don't need to remember your name you don't remember your personal history to know that to know yourself as presence it's it's available here and now it's just has always been available here and now but has always been overlooked jesus said the kingdom of heaven he talked continuously about the kingdom of heaven what does that mean completely misinterpreted for a long long time my interpretation of what he said called kingdom of heaven is i translate or paraphrase where kingdom no longer fits our world kingdom is dimension realm or dimension heaven heaven in english is a word that in most other languages is the same word as sky in french in spanish in german heaven and sky are the same word so this kingdom of the sky the dimension of what is the sky what is heaven when you look at the sky you see vast spaciousness so my translation of kingdom of heaven is the realm or dimension of spaciousness so jesus used that analogy to point people to an inner dimension of consciousness that is available to them here and now not in some future not some future point that i need to get to i need to get to the kingdom of heaven it's here and now he said that all the time but but still they made it into some future point and and he also said the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived you cannot say it's over here or it's over there but truly i tell you it is here within you what was he talking to talking about the inner realm of spaciousness or stillness where the mind subsides and you know yourself as an i am presence that is your true identity and once you know your true identity in the background of your daily life then you can deal with the foreground of your life in a much better way and the foreground of your life becomes a pleasant playground where you actually do good and enjoy yourself without demanding that something in the foreground of your life should make you happy including a person terrible demand to make upon a person to say make me happy it's a recipe for disaster as you might might have experienced it this make me happy usually ends in divorce and it usually means it usually means make me unhappy so anything that you expect to make you happy in this world is not going to make you happy short short while short brief moments perhaps but not any lasting happiness nothing can give you lasting happiness except the realization of the i am presence there is a peace and and a joy is very subtle joy in there and then the world is no longer such a frustrating place yes challenges come still come but the way you deal with them is more peaceful you don't create drama out of little challenges you don't create huge unhappiness when things go wrong that's the shift that's the awakening of consciousness and this is the purpose of

your life is to embody that whatever other other purpose there is and that varies from person to person but whatever the your individual purpose is it needs to be aligned with the universal purpose of your life and that is awakening consciousness thank you does being in the now or awareness alter the dream or movie that is being played i understand that the dream or movie is not real now what that's quite a good question i understand okay you can have some conceptual understanding if you see that all forms are fleeting that is undoubtedly true it gives you and you say god it's it is eckhart says it's like a dream and if i look at it it's actually true it is a bit like a dream because yesterday is dissolved already just like last night's dream is gone it's evaporated and and my people that i knew have dissolved and and what i did years ago the my vacation five years ago we were in europe look there are the photos where is that now it's dissolved already it's just a figure standing in front of the eiffel tower what is what is on that it's gone already so all the fleetingness is just amazing thing so conceptually you can understand it and say okay it is all of it is a bit like a movie now what now that doesn't free you really from because the next moment something happens and you're totally part of it again you're totally trapped in the movie and compulsively you're you're acting out your part your script your conditioned behavior patterns your conditioned thinking your conditioned reactions so one moment intellectually you can say yeah it really is like a movie and then the phone rings what you're playing your part again you're in the middle of it you've completely forgotten that it's a movie it is only when you are when nothing is happening no phone is ringing nobody's knocking on your door and then you can sit again say yeah it's all like a movie so there needs to be a deeper realization that goes beyond the conceptual and that is the opening up of what i sometimes call space consciousness in you when you truly contemplate the impermanence of all things not just as an intellectual idea that you agree with but to look at it without any going beyond concepts and look look face the fact of impermanence directly for example by looking at if somebody close to you dies sitting with their body for quite a while and then go through the emotions then go perhaps beyond the emotions or go to see any dead body although for that in the west you can't do it in india you can you can't just go somewhere and say i would like to see a dead body you have to they won't allow it in india you just sit in certain street corners or in certain places and you see them they're carrying them past to the funeral pyre and you can just sit there and the most powerful thing would be then to see a dead body being burned without any concepts just face the fact directly that opens up space consciousness that opens up the depths in you where you begin to disidentify from form when you see a form dissolving in front of you and you don't conceptualize you just face it it is so amazing and even me talking about it can to some extent help you to go through that as you imagine it it's sometimes enough to imagine it the form dissolving being burned the body that was so real a few hours ago it's now dissolving in flames and that is such a it's so incredible to if you had totally believed in the solidity of the physical universe it's so incredible that you become speechless and thoughtless and in that when the form dissolves and you face it completely something opens up within you that we can call the formless and it's deeply peaceful not happy no

deeply peaceful and it can even happen when there's sadness deep sadness and yet and behind the sadness there's a deep peace and this would be the case if somebody close to you dies and you see that happening to somebody you could not not weep if you see your father or your mother being burned now here you want they won't allow you to see it but if you could you would weep but there's a possibility that at the same time you because you see it is it is you live it is not the universal condition of all humans in all forms and it's your turn quite soon too you seeing all that something in you would or that there are tears and yet you see how short-lived it all is and then something opens up in you which is spacious and has no form it's and that's consciousness itself so consciousness can dis-identify the dis-identification can happen when you deeply contemplate the fleetingness of a form a human form can even be with an animal your dog dies it could happen also some people become very deeply very close to an animal after living with an animal for many years and suddenly it goes so any again this is where loss comes in any loss that can also do it but of course the deepest loss is the loss of a human and so when it's not resisted then you see it oh and you can't any idea that you formulate will be running away from the simple and bare fact of impermanence any any conceptualization explanation will stop you from going deeper even if you have the explanation you say well they're not really dead they're really moving on and i just have to okay but that if you don't explain anything that you go deeper beyond form rather than explaining to yourself that they exist in some other form which of course then eventually will also go through transformation again and so on and so on that's the power of contemplating transience which is everywhere for me it's always even a spiritual thing to to look at old photos of people nobody knows who they were and i always whenever i see them in magazines or sometimes in antiquarian bookshops they have collections of you see these old photos and they're just they've all dissolved and that's i find that this is deeply peaceful old films made let's say film made in 19 30 1935 40 and all these people that are running out the screen in getting excited about this in that the actors are all gone they've all dissolved and if you see a crowd scene people walking along the streets of new york or wherever all the crowds all long dissolved and the crowds that you see now in a few years gone and that's those are incredible meditations when you face that and so that's the the power of facing the fact of what the buddha called in the pali language anicca impermanence all phenomena are impermanent fleeting anicca buddha said wow and if you attach yourself and identify with any form you will experience dukkha suffering also be translated as misery also can be translated as unsatisfactoriness and so on unhappiness because the buddha said there is no self in any form that's the truth of anatta no self so if you're seeking a self in a form if you identify with a form with a body even a thought form or the psychological form of me then you identify with impermanence you're seeking a self where there's only impermanence and that self is the delusion and she saw that two thousand six hundred years ago the truth of the impermanence of all things but he saw it i mean people knew already but just to see it and to look he said look so those three are to me the most essential parts of the buddha's teaching dukkha anicca anatta dukkha is the fact of

suffering if you identify with which means seek a self in impermanent forms not just in bodies but also in thought forms emotional forms and the psychological form of me so the entire buddhist teaching and is really the disidentification from form in order to realize the formless that underlies all that and of course the buddha called that emptiness which is not a very inspiring concept and he did that on purpose because if he had given us an inspiring concept we could start believing in it and the belief in the concept would become a substitute for the realization emptiness can't do that with emptiness emptiness can't have a name what's it called but emptiness oh jesus used the word kingdom of heaven it's the same thing it's a formless realm of course that is on the one hand you feel ah kingdom of heaven of course much easier to misinterpret it's more inspiring of course but much easier to misinterpret and very easy to make into something somewhere that is somewhere else which they did for a long time and many still do kingdom of heaven is we go to it some people are good enough you'll go to kingdom in in many languages actually the word for heaven and the word for sky are the same so in spanish cielo in german himmel you go you go to the sky and so although jesus said the kingdom of heaven you cannot observe the kingdom of heaven cannot be well it does not appear with signs to be observed it is not here or there you can't say there it is that's what jesus said nevertheless people say the sky you the kingdom of the sky it's that's the in many languages that's what it is i believe i got sidetracked a little with impermanence but really this is what it's all about it is a movie because it's like a movie or a dream because it is impermanent and so when you know that as a deep fact when you experience the impermanence by facing it directly then you are not so unconscious anymore more that you act out the script unconsciously continuously for the rest of your life the script means the conditioned patterns of your mind the reactive patterns the thought patterns the emotional patterns if there is an awareness that becomes the most important factor then and then you move back into the movie because you participate in your life situation and your life with an added factor you could imagine a little bit like an actor in a movie who suddenly realizes that he or she is not really the character that's being played out but he still plays his role or her role does his things but then the realization that he is not that will affect the role so he's not going to stick to the script as before the script will still be there but changes will come into the script because the awareness brings an additional factor into it so where in this whereas the script for example dictates that when this woman leaves him he goes into dreadful despair and contemplates suicide perhaps as this happens that was the script but suddenly in the movie because the awareness is there he just instead of going to the roof and contemplating jumping off the building he finds himself going to the beach and looking at the sea and breathing things change in the script suddenly spaciousness comes into the script where before there was and another thing that happens in the script he may look at a leaves moving in the wind a little breeze coming through the tree and you can if you see that in the film isn't that amazing suddenly the camera goes from the script into suddenly another dimension is present in the film you look some films actually do that those those films where there is a spiritual dimension that's i've seen

films where suddenly the camera goes into and show something that's not part of the not part of the action it on the way almost takes you out of the action it brings a depth to it like the as i mentioned in some before there's a paper piece of paper or a paper bag being tossed about in the wind in the american beauty that film and and the and you watch the amazing thing of wow nothing to do with the action and so a dimension comes into the script and then the movie begins to change because another dimension flows into it so that's the answer to now what but so it's not enough to to say oh well it's all like a dream or movie that's a that's not a realization that's only a concept in your head for the realization you need to deeply see the impermanence which we just talked about or really face it then something opens up within you and then saying that it's like a dream or movie is not just a thought in your head it's a realization you're actually fully aware of the impermanent nature of all things and that changes the way in which you interact hope you had a good lunch abundant but not excessive otherwise you might go to sleep beautiful day particularly appreciated by those of us who come from the northern hemisphere where it's getting cold now we will have plenty of opportunity in the next few days for questions also questions from you answers perhaps too today i may just answer some written questions this is only a very small selection out of several hundred it's hard to choose it's only almost random choice not totally random but almost but before i do that perhaps just a few words and this will take between five minutes and one hour when you want to strengthen the physical body what do you do you exercise but what what is that actually when you exercise what do you do when you exercise one way of putting it is to say that you create difficulty for the body you create obstacles for the body to overcome there it is running on the treadmill lifting weight it's an you're creating a difficulty for the body any exercise is making life difficult for the body but that's a way of looking at it that's not a normal way of looking at it you take the body out of its comfort zone although there is a stage where the body once it gets going the body may enjoy the energy of it but until that flows there's a discomfort and that's the only way the body can get stronger if the body stays in its comfort zone then well you would be lying on a sofa or in a deck chair it's very nice but the body doesn't change so that's an interesting almost an analogy for something that happens to humans because it seems that life for everybody creates difficulties so it's not one would have thought if i were god i would make life easy for everybody and you would then see most likely if you did that most likely there would be no evolution would ever have happened or no further evolution if you do it right now because it's only it seems both on the physical level and beyond it's only through facing difficulties which you could also call challenges which you could also call problems if you like which you could also call one damn thing after another the strange thing is only by encountering these challenges do we grow in consciousness and generate energy it awakens us eventually now if you overdo physical exercise you put too much strain on the body you could kill the body you could kill yourself and this has happened people who were so obsessed with physical exercise that they overdid it i've read for example whenever it was one or two years ago a man who wrote about the incredible benefits of jogging died of a heart attack while he was jogging

he wasn't that old so you can overdo it and then instead of the body getting stronger it dies and you could also say when you look at life and humans life on this planet probably many other planets you would say well it's all very well sometimes it seems to work that through facing challenges and problems we grow we grow out of identification with mind we grow out of the ego we transcend our conditioned state of consciousness and a new consciousness arises and if i know not actually speaking for myself without facing difficulties and challenges there would not have been any growth in consciousness and no awakening if i had had a what's the word for example a trust fund where you know from a very early age your parents have already looked after your security and you know from an early age you if you don't want to work or anything you don't have to you can have a comfortable life without ever doing anything so there are people like that there may even be one or two here but if you are here and you are a trust fund baby then other things must have happened to you that created difficulties it wasn't financial but there were other things and even eventually to a trust fund baby other difficulties will happen but for quite a while it could be that this person remains stagnant or might enjoy certain activities or indulge in sensory pleasures until it gets too much it's no longer satisfying and then reaches a critical stage and sometimes there was a man in i met him many many years ago i was taken to an a kind of cocktail party i wasn't i didn't move in those circles but it just happened accidentally that i ended up there and somebody took me and says you must come and look this is you're going to meet the sixth richest man in england or somebody somebody a friend of mine who was impressed by these things so i met this man who became rich apparently because he invented one little thing one he had one idea and became a billionaire this is not uncommon these days by the way with the internet but this was before the internet he had one idea and that's called tetra pack the drinks that come in a carton and it has a carton that has a particular kind of opens in a particular way so that you can pour out the liquid it's called it's a patent tetra pack so he came up with that and he became a billionaire and i've talked to him briefly and then had forgot about many many years past and forgot about it and two or three years ago i happened to read in the paper that his son who was by now he was probably 40 years old was a drug addict seriously addicted to drugs and lost completely control of his life was drift completely and he was they arrested him he was driving under the influence of some drugs and when the police entered his house they found in one of the bedrooms in big house in belgravia in london they found his wife the dead body of his wife had been in that bed for several months and he just couldn't say he hadn't killed her but he she probably died of a dark drug overdose and he just couldn't face dealing with it so he just closed the door and there was a dead body this can happen to the extreme cases of trust fund dysfunction so in other words when life gets too easy for you things can quickly deteriorate but that's your opportunity then because first life gets too easy then because it gets too easy it deteriorates and you lose more and more consciousness and then it is possible that you encounter so much suffering that then finally experience the difficulty of life and then there's a possibility of growth so this could happen to this man too now there's always the possibility of awakening so you could say of course well

this is all very good it works in some cases in some cases physical exercise makes the body stronger and in some cases encountering difficulties in life helps you to awaken but you might say there are many other cases where all that happens is just seems to be just difficulties with no growth that's not at least that what it looks like on the surface people who have not enough food who are starving or diseases not to mention human-made difficulties which probably like warfare and violence inflicted by humans and other humans which improbably has created far more suffering for humanity than man-made disasters the madness of of humans who having not yet evolved into full humans because they lack benevolence and empathy and goodwill towards their fellow humans at least those who don't fit into their mental concepts of us and them so they're inflicted enormous suffering so part of the difficulties faced by humans have been inflicted by other unconscious humans so when you look at the life on the planet many people use this as an argument to prove that god there can be no god they say this is a very common argument they say look at the suffering if there were a god how would he allow all that suffering to take place and if there is a god this is how the argument goes if there is a god who allows that suffering then that god whether we call him he or she or it would be morally inferior to us because we see that this suffering is not just so these are arguments that you often hear people who want to prove that there is no god there cannot be a god and if there is a god it's a malevolent god but they may not be right the premise from which they start may already be erroneous and that premise is that there is a controlling figure somewhere who who from somewhere looked at everything and who could if he wanted to change things here and there and arrange things so that there's absolutely everything is absolutely fine all the time so there's a projection of a powerful figure who could exert and sometimes does exert influence and at other times withholds help and inflicts suffering or of course then you have to project come up with another figure if you want you don't want to have a malevolent god you have to predict there's a devil okay then now we have to divide we have two deities then the good one and the bad one gets very complicated but it's quite possible just as an alternative suggestion that the basic premise is already erroneous there is no controlling father figure what about god let's call god now a universal intelligence expressing him her itself through billions of life forms taking form incarnating into form so to speak throughout the universe so gradually the universe is becomes an expression of that underlying intelligence which comes from a dimension that has no time and space to it but gradually in this dimension gradually brings about this multiplicity of life forms which at first is asleep there's a dreamlike state and then gradually there's an awakening in this dimension i do not attempt it would be presumptuous and absurd for me to attempt to explain the universe so i'm going to stop right now because anybody who thinks he can explain the universe using a few sounds produced by the vocal chords which after all only consists of five vowels a e i o u and then you add a few what are the others diphthongs or whatever consonants it's been a long time consonants are produced by air pressure in the mouth so by combining the sound these five basic sounds produced by the vocal chords with a little bit of air pressure here and there and attempting to explain

the universe is obviously absurd but one can give little hints it's okay it's it's a little bit like more like a poetic image it's a little bit like that and then you go and then you may find that on some deeper level which is non-conceptual there can be a different kind of insight or understanding of what the universe is all about but you may not be able to talk about it very much and if you do talk about it you might talk about it in the form of a poem or a poetic image or just a little analogy or as Jesus used parables and so there's no ultimate explanation through words it would be totally impossible words can point to something give a little hint and then they can also point to a state of consciousness where you can realize certain things i don't want to say intuitively but some some almost intuitively knowing non-conceptually certain the nature of reality because you have looked deeply enough within yourself and if you've looked deeply enough within yourself then you understand not conceptually but on another level many of the secrets of the universe so because it's all in you you're a microcosm of the entire universe if you understand the universe understand yourself not conceptually you can't go very far conceptually so i've had a few insights here and there of that i wanted to put on paper when i wrote the power of now as i mentioned before i wrote for example there is a black hole at the center of each galaxy and in that time nobody said that and i believe the editor said you can't say that because you can't prove it nobody knows so i took it out and how do you know even that there is a black hole at the center have you been there no i know that there's a black hole inside me and that's the emptiness i think that's what i said but he didn't understand and later years later i read about they actually now say that there is such a thing well or such a no thing because it's not a thing it's formless so the argument then could be a fallacy that says if if there is a god there can be no god because he would do something god may be awakening in this dimension in the other dimension god is there's no time the universal intelligence is already complete timeless or but in this dimension it moves in and and it awakens in this dimension that's the only way i can put it don't want to go any further so if you consider that possibility that and also humanity you would say it's not fair that one person is born into relative easy circumstances well in the west another person is born into third world country and it never is given a chance and this is true also if you look at it only from a surface point of view but what if all humanity is one consciousness that is going through a certain degree of suffering and each entity seemingly independent entity going through his or her own suffering and only briefly appearing as one body and then appearing again in a different form so you could look at all of humanity as one a single consciousness that is awakening said you are a cell so to speak in that single awakening consciousness another interesting intuition i had that you could write a science fiction book about that the eventually there will only be one human being left when the evolution is complete there will only be not no longer billions of humans all humans will be contained in this one conscious being and probably not only all humans but all life on the planet will be contained in that one conscious being which is not male and not female and of course has no physical form anymore and that's where it's all going and then on all the other planets similar things happen so each planet produces one magnificent consciousness

and that's where we are moving to and that the essential identity of that magnificent consciousness which is part of the greater consciousness that again is a cell in the greater consciousness that the essential identity of that one magnificent conscious being is already your essential identity here and now so it's not nothing separate from you it already is awakening in you the one consciousness is awakening in you and in every human and in you it's already a fairly advanced stage of awakening relative to many other humans on the planet you have come into contact with the spiritual teaching which already signifies that you are at a relatively advanced stage for millions and millions of humans the only teacher they have unfortunately as yet is their suffering in the same way as you until you came to a point where you were ready to embrace conscious evolution your teacher was your suffering my teacher was my suffering that it brought me to that point of the beginning of the awakening and the opening stepping out of ego so retrospectively i can be grateful for the suffering and also retrospectively you can be grateful for the suffering that you have encountered because it has brought you here here not just the physical place here it has brought you where you are at right now in your state of consciousness which is awakening and that is wonderful so that to just add a practical afterthought to this if possible at all do not resent encountering difficulties or problems in your life because that's how it works and it doesn't stop even even if you awaken even if you're awakened there's still things that you get challenged further everybody gets challenged by life in one way or another you can't even the trust fund baby gets challenged by life eventually so so when you encounter difficulties small or big see if you don't say this should not be happening this is the underlying attitude if that's your underlying attitude you're in a state of resistance for example many difficulties come in the form of other humans humans are difficult you might have noticed many so they come in in the form of other humans and then the underlying mindset for many people is this shouldn't be happening these these people shouldn't behave like that what we're really saying is they should be enlightened and why aren't they well what about you so difficulties come in the form of other humans and then you see this is meant to be you're meant to be challenged by other humans and you cannot not be challenged no matter how conscious you are you will encounter other humans who are not or not yet and they will try to create problems for you and sometimes they achieve that it is true also that you attract fewer unconscious humans into your life as you awaken more the awakening it is true that you are you're not going to move in circles where you surround it completely by completely unconscious humans but you can you cannot totally avoid contact with unconscious humans in fact they need to come into your field of consciousness because they can be helped in many cases by being in your field of consciousness but they can only be helped if you do not react when you encounter them if you say you do what you have to do but you don't the the underlying mindset is not this shouldn't be they shouldn't do that they should know better well they don't so then other difficulties come in other ways because you can encounter so we just really talked about relationship if other humans means relationships they can be the intimate relationships of people living together there can be relationships of people working

together other kinds of relationships then now this already makes up for a lot of problems that people face it's relationship problems and then you can and then you have others if you don't have relationship problems and life says okay i'll give him or her something else then you have a work problem at work usually connected with the relationship too but maybe some additional factors or you have a health problem you have a problem where you live you have a financial problem that's a big one for many not enough or maybe is enough but the mind says it's not enough who knows shortage the problem of losing your job the problem of insecurity which isn't a problem unless you think it you should have security that life is insecure you don't know what's going to happen next to you that can be a huge challenge but once you accept that actually insecurity can contribute if you no longer fight it if you don't demand that your life should be secure it can contribute to the arising of presence because it forces you more into the present moment insecurity means you go into the future and see you can't control it anymore you don't know what's going to happen next oh dear i wish i knew i wish i had secure job a secure income a secure family environment i wish i had a secure pension plan i wish i had a secure life insurance i wish i had secure this insecure that then i would be okay of course you wouldn't these things are if you remove the element of risk or insecurity from a person's life this is similar to the trust fund baby then you remove one of the most important areas where you can grow by being challenged so sometimes the emphasis in our societies in the west is too much on security these days the i i mentioned somewhere before i read last year in i was going by a school secondary school and it was the beginning of the summer vacation and they have a big sign outside where there's always notices they post notices and then on that big sign at the school it said have a great vacation be safe that sounds reasonable advice because you don't want to be unsafe but is that the main thing of your vacation i was you come back after the summer the teacher asks you and say i was really safe what did you do i didn't leave my room because i wanted to be really safe so there is life again needs to be a balance between security and risk taking and accepting the insecure the basic insecurity of all of all life i when i wrote the power of now i was already in my uh late 40s and i had didn't have a home anymore there was that wasn't the time that the original time when i didn't have a home because after the rest time i did have a home but then i let go of it and then i had a limited amount of money as i briefly mentioned in the book to finish the book what would happen after that in my late 40s no life insurance no job prospects no income no savings except those that were running out no home no relationship even nothing so and that insecurity contributed to the intensity of present presence through which the book came it could have led to fear and it could have blocked me if i had demanded that my life should be more secure than it is but i did not demand that security i accepted the insecurity and it became enormous presence presence because all security is has to do with future orientation so the more you have future orientation the more insecure you feel because you cannot control the outcome so the fact that my money was running out that i had no home of my own anymore i was just going from place to place contributed to the energy behind the writing and the book so that's a

wonderful thing some people cannot take that step they feel if i'm if i let's step into the unknown the impulse that came to me was so strong at the time when i knew i had to leave england for the reason i didn't know and i had to move to the west coast of north america didn't know why but the impulse was so strong i had to obey it well i didn't have to but i did but i'm sure if i had not obeyed that impulse which wasn't didn't just come once it was there every day i would have probably fallen ill and maybe would be dead already by now so the life demanded that i step out into the unknown if that is the case with you then you know what to do without being rash about it you still need to look at the practicalities so insecurity is one of the great challenges wonderful and all these things of course life insurance these are just illusions how can you ensure your life first of all life insurance isn't life insurance it's death insurance because that's that's what it is about they just don't call it death insurance because nobody would want to buy it so the universe the one consciousness whatever you want to call it is awakening in every human and every human's essential identity is that one consciousness so it's not a it's not a personal thing because if you think yourself only as a person then you have the delusion that you're an autonomous entity cut off from everything and everybody else but you're not an autonomous entity you are just a cell in this vastness and for a few years the cell gives itself a name or is given a name so and so that's me me me it really changes your life when you're the way you feel you sense your own life to be if you are the awakening consciousness in this body it's wonderful the retreat in australia will be held at a resort owned by a colorful politician is it possible for mr palmer and yourself to do a talk together as it would be an interesting comparison of the different states of human spiritual evolution besides he may for the first time be still and listen well it is not nothing is impossible it could happen he could suddenly awaken spiritually if he hasn't yet i don't know much about him i only saw one little clip on youtube in which he expressed his opinions and so who knows it may happen still waiting to hear from donald trump about it sometimes when you think certain people are you think this person definitely is not going to awaken it's just impossible but you may be wrong it's things can happen to any human that can suddenly trigger a spiritual awakening so let's see what happens this is a question uh somebody who does not have any pressing challenge his only challenge right now seems to be the repetitive nature of ordinary existence and he asks i notice the repetitive daily patterns of waking washing eating doing this and that eating washing sleeping groundhog day it causes a low feeling when i notice the repetitiveness there's a misprint here is this conscious awareness or just a thought or feeling and how to not feel low about this cycle how to not feel low the repetitive nature of waking up eating going to work the answer to that is expressed in the zen famous zen saying chopping wood carrying water chopping wood carrying water describes life i suppose in a zen monastery where you in the morning you chop the wood and then you go about your daily tasks and then you carry the water and what what chopping wood carrying water means what it implies is that you bring absolute presence to these repetitive tasks so you do them with that high degree of alertness and you're present with every movement then it's no longer a repetitive task because it only happens this

time and it can be a helpful way of bringing presence into this world so use the everyday tasks so with you it's not just well not that many people these days chop wood or carry water because you've got running water but there are other things that you do repetitively you could make a list for things that you do every day certainly and those bring conscious attention to those things so that the doing becomes a meditation so to speak and not a means to an end but an end in itself whereas usually all those repetitive tasks are a means to an end and you want to get it over with as quick as quickly as you can and mentally you're somewhere totally different somewhere else probably or you're complaining how boring this life is so if you can bring that alert presence to the menial tasks of everyday life those can be transformed into a meditation and then you might not even need to sit in meditation if you can use all those things and bring presence to them and do that within presence and through presence then you don't need to sit for a long time you're already doing it in the do this the doing so it's a re complete reef i don't know what a reversal of the usual approach to these things and you can then welcome these daily tasks and then you can see the beauty of chopping wood and carrying water when when it's done in full consciousness this is by somebody who does not want to sit in a cave for 20 years sitting in the cave for 20 years is lifeless that is no more living than being taken up with ego form shouldn't be being manifest into form is self-annihilating and unnecessary being throwing down itself into form only to require the denial of form seems masochistic and self-annihilating okay i think i know what she means we are not in we are not denying form we want to appreciate the forms deeply all the beautiful life forms around us humans nature the sky everything yes there are it is true some spiritual traditions that deny form and that say that all form is evil whatever uh there was even a time in christianity when christianity was very much engaged in asceticism uh even washing your body was considered as an unholy thing to do because it would be giving too much attention to the physical form and the more dirty you were the more holy you were so that's not that is not necessary and really the answer to this question summarizes what we've been talking about you in order to really appreciate the all the life forms around you you need to be rooted in the formless and with one foot in the in one dimension the other foot in the other dimension and that is when you become still and then you look around that is one example of having one foot just to simplify it to have one foot in one dimension and the other so to speak in the other dimension if you become still thinking subsides and then you look around when you look around that's the dimension of form and you see the multiplicity of forms people flowers trees animals objects light forms but you also you're also aware that there's a stillness but what is that stillness that stillness is a presence an awareness it has no form it is essentially who you are and from there you perceive and you're rooted in that one foot in being and you perceive one foot is in form and then you can even start to think sometimes when you have to you think about something without losing an underlying sense of presence there's still a stillness behind the thinking and in between the thoughts there's still there's still that there that means having one foot in one dimension the other in the one formless being and form so you're not denying form it's only the deep appreciation of

form can only happen when you realize what lies behind all forms and that is the one being or the one consciousness otherwise without having one foot in the being dimension all you have is do is the multiplicity of forms and then you grasp at one and you think that might satisfy you and you look something else or you reject that one and grasp at that one and you look out now what do i need now i need i need that i need that not necessarily an object it could be an object but i need that kind of situation i need that kind of acknowledgement i need that kind of i need the respect from you i need this and i need that i need to be acknowledged i need to be given attention i need your love so there's always that why do you need all those things i need a new car why do you need all those things because you don't have you're completely lost only in the world of form and you look for ultimate satisfaction through the world of form and nothing in this world of form can ultimately satisfy you not for briefly yes briefly a good big meal good meal can satisfy you that was a great meal sex can satisfy you briefly it doesn't last that long so it goes and then and then that's then it's over and then you go okay who are you what was your name and then the problems start so and and then you you have to use forms you want to use them to enhance yourself with it just doesn't work so that's why you need to you can only appreciate really the world of form when you have one foot in in being awareness stillness and then relate to the world and then think if you have to think and when thinking comes to an end your back is a stillness again and even while you think you can still think within that field of stillness you never lose awareness of the stillness or the awareness itself which is the stillness you feel yourself as a conscious presence that's having the foot in the in being and it's only from there that you can love the other as yourself and all those things because loving the other as yourself means recognizing the other as yourself and of course the body of the other is not yourself that's very different from you even the psychological makeup of the other is not yourself but there is a there is a deep dimension to the other and that is what you share with the other it's the same consciousness has taken a different form but the underlying consciousness is the same it's your consciousness ultimately there isn't my consciousness and your consciousness there's only consciousness and that's so the recognition of that one consciousness expressing itself through countless forms is love or if you want to call it goodwill or benevolence or agape meta loving kindness and then you don't need love anymore because you give love not in the conventional sense of the ego oh i love you it's no no it's you give you give the goodwill it comes you're the giver of love not the d not the demander of love but the the irony is when you give love you get it back so and you don't need it you don't need it back but you get it back and you appreciate it when it comes back it's lovely the bell is a spiritual alarm clock it says wake up be present and it's strange to see myself reflected so many times in this room just slight differences on the surface one consciousness you won't really know that for yourself until or unless you're able to stop thinking if only for a moment and in that moment when you're not thinking then you know yourself as consciousness it's so subtle and so easily overlooked that most people have no idea that such a thing is possible although certain sages or teachers since ancient times have pointed to it using different

pointers and as usually happens the pointer is mistaken for that towards which it points in india the ancient spiritual philosophy there's a term called turiya which means the fourth it refers to the fourth state of consciousness the normal state of consciousness in normal existence are the waking state which is although there are different levels to the but let's leave that aside the waking state which is everybody's normal life experience unfolds in the waking state there's the dream state when you go to bed at night and as we know psychologists agree who have tested what happens to your consciousness when you're going to sleep when you sleep are there fundamentally two stages there's dreamless sleep and there's a dream state and this is what the three states of consciousness mean dreamless sleep which is wonderful but you don't know it but it's amazing that every night and sometimes not just in the night sometimes it happens in the day the dreamless state of merging with the one pulls you and that's why all life forms on the planet periodically go unconscious in the conventional term of the word isn't it strange let's say if you came from some other planet where this doesn't happen you would arrive here and say isn't that strange all these people every day every night they they drop completely unconscious they go it must be very strange if you come from a place where this doesn't happen but whether there is such a place i don't know probably not dreamless sleep the dream stage which is measured we can also watch if you look at your cat or your dog you can observe the differences between dreamless sleep exactly the same as with humans dreamless sleep when they're totally still and the dream state when there is some twitching or movement there's eye movement as in humans rapid eye movement it's called and when psychologists measure sleep then they measure the moment eyes move you're dreaming in the same if you watch your dog or your cat the same thing happens in addition the dog or cat may exhibit other signs of dreaming in the case of a cat the whiskers go the mouth may move i wonder what they're dreaming about i at some i had three cats at some point when i lived in england so i observed them very closely and this is what happens and with dogs sometimes the legs move in when they're they're running obviously somewhere or the tail goes quite amazing dreamless sleep dream and normal wakefulness is there anything else yes there is but most humans don't know that there's the fourth state of consciousness which is thoughtless awareness and to the other fourth and that's um reserved for a few yogis in the past who through strenuous effort realized that they are consciousness and yet now it becomes more accessible and this would be in a more enlightened society or world the most fundamental thing that is taught at school lesson number one the fourth state of consciousness and every day that is a lesson so that they become familiar with that but that's not happening yet that's fine we are here to make it happen but first it needs to happen within yourself a moment of cessation of thinking and what's left is a simple a clear field of spaciousness one can use other words and whether this lasts for you for a few seconds at a time or longer as long as it's there it doesn't matter how long more important is how frequently it arises in your life you might become a very good meditator if you practice some form of meditation and it may be although most meditators don't actually get there well maybe maybe most or half of

them don't actually get there because they're trying to get there in their meditation so they cannot be because they're trying to become so the very meditation method may be misleading because you're trying to become good at it you have some goal you need to arrive at but that's not that takes you away from the realization of the spacious awareness which is already here now it's not a state to be achieved and that's another thing that has been misleading and has misled countless spiritual seekers and continues to mislead countless spiritual seekers they believe that there is a state that they need to achieve or somehow bring about or produce but that way of looking at it one can look at it that way yes but that way of looking at it actually is not helpful and it's not absolutely correct it is much closer to the truth to say that is that state that you want to achieve or thought you had to achieve is already here in you but why don't you know that because it's continuously overlooked so why is it overlooked because the world which consists of the multiplicity of sense perceptions stuff happening plus thoughts have such a hypnotic pull that that's all there is to most humans they only know themselves as that the this content-based consciousness the content of your mind is sense perceptions your life whatever is going on in your life and what you're thinking about what's going on in your life the story that is imposed on the bare facts of this present moment which really is always quite simple and not complicated but the story brings in a lot of heaviness and stuff so you put the mental story on top of the simplicity of the present moment and then your life becomes problematic i don't know anybody whose life is not problematic on that level so you're not the only one or life has not treated you unfairly because it's problematic so the most important life lesson apart from any other goal or purpose you may have in your life which of course varies from person to person many different goals and purposes and that is good but those are all the differences on the surface level of reality your what you do in your daily life or what you aspire to on this that level may be very different from person next to you but on a more fundamental level a deeper goal that is every human's destiny and should be the underlying goal before any personal goal arises and before you pursue any personal goal and while you pursue any personal goal to realize that the most important life lesson to be learned while you are here in this form or as this form is the realization of who you are in essence beyond the person and then you have you live and this is the mastery of life so to speak that you are moving towards and some of you already virtually there or there and you're just here because it's you enjoy being here the mastery of life is to to live in the two dimensions simultaneously so you don't deny the level of forms you don't say i'm not going to do anything anymore i'm not going to take any action anymore because it's all illusion some spiritual seekers will tell you that it's all illusion anyway so what's the point of doing anything i'm just going to sit and there may be a few very few individuals here and there whose destiny it may be to become just an opening in into that dimension and to have no longer any personal destiny whatsoever those are very few and most of them live in india and that's good they they they provide those few provide a kind of selfless service because whatever one human being the state of consciousness any one human being affects the state of consciousness of the totality of human beings because there's only

one human consciousness and beyond the human consciousness there's only one universal consciousness so there are a few who are meant to be whose purpose it is to go just for one year five years ten years so if that is your destiny if you think it might be your destiny i would recommend that you move to india where that destiny is recognized and respected which of course is also the reason why in india there quite a few who make a living by pretending that that's their destiny that's another matter for most of humanity the destiny is balance balancing one way of putting it balancing being and doing or we could say balancing being and becoming so on the level of doing or becoming there there are certain things still perhaps that you want to achieve there are maybe certain things that you want to become you might be at right now you you might be engaged in learning this or that music or some whatever some science some skills whatever it is dance engineering astronomy astrology you can't immediately be a master at that that involves becoming and it involves doing so you're not complete on the level of becoming yet and that level of doing and becoming is one part of life the emphasis in this teaching is not on becoming not because i reject becoming but because what the world needs more at this time because it's the balance is totally lost what the world needs more is the awareness of being the being awareness so that a balance can happen in the world whereas most of the world is lost in becoming and doing go to any big city and they're all running around and they're all becoming now it might be for a few years it might be exhilarating but then the frustration sets in and your body begins to suffer and become ill we constantly achieve the next thing but part of becoming is what i often describe as always the next thing never this this is never fully acknowledged because the full acknowledgement of the present moment belongs to the being realm so a person who is constantly engaged in becoming does not can never fully acknowledge the present moment because he or she is always running away from the present moment and there is of course there needs to be the balance between yes you're going somewhere you have a life goal or either a huge life goal or a limited life goal like you want to learn this or that subject you have that life goal but as you pursue that goal whatever it is are you losing continuously the present moment so you're no longer you're never comfortable with the isness of the present moment you never see the not except perhaps for brief glances you never see the beauty around you and the aliveness there's never a full appreciation of the miraculous nature of life that that is always around you there's because you're too absorbed in becoming and so if you went to the other extreme then you be you would become that you would be the yogi who renounces all becoming and as i said in india that works if you do it here they will lock you up so what in your life as you pursue a goal another way of putting of approaching it is to ask yourself if you are not really enjoying while you pursue the goal whatever it is in your life if you are not really enjoying the doing because you are so focused on becoming and achieving and arriving at this future point that the enjoyment of the doing is so is greatly diminished or disappears completely because all you want to do is arrive but you're not there yet that's the nature of stress how stress arises stress means there is a continuous focus on the next moment so you are torn away and this is a produced by the human

mind through thinking you are torn away internally from the present moment into a non-existent because future never exists except as a thought you are torn into this so-called future which is a never never land because it can never arrive you can never reach the future because the moment it becomes reality in your life it's the present moment so by having this mindset an excessive focus on becoming or arriving or achieving you lose completely the being dimension and then your life is completely out of balance even if you achieve in the eyes of the world fame or wealth or worldly success and yet you are a frustrated and unhappy human being perhaps pretending that you are happy but you're not and then you have to take drugs or alcohol or go from one relationship to another or compulsively pursue the next thing and the next thing and the next thing accumulate more of this and this and so it's well that's not a mastery of life even if you have your private jet does not mean you have achieved mastery of life in fact you may be completely deluded not necessarily you could have a private jet and have achieved the master wouldn't that be great so that that is our purpose here is to have that balance and here the emphasis of course on of this teaching is on finding the being dimension awareness of being which is why i talk so much about the present moment because this is always the moment your attention goes fully into the present moment you have withdrawn attention from becoming and doing and you are that what arises is the being dimension so and that is associated also with a sometimes brief but vitally important cessation of thinking in that moment when you become completely aware of the present moment and it starts with sense perception you're suddenly aware of your surroundings you may also suddenly be aware of the inner energy field that you feel you're alive in this present moment there is aliveness all around you and you can perceive it through your senses you hear you feel you see you smell but there's also an aliveness an inherent aliveness in your body so you become aware simultaneously in the present moment of a sense of aliveness within and without so in addition to what you see with your senses there is a an underlying field of aliveness that you can be aware of in the present moment and that's the being dimension or presence and that's who you are in essence but that's not only who you are in essence that is the essence of everything so when you realize that for yourself it's not the person who has that realization the universe has that realization the universe which for a moment because your life is a moment and on a cosmic scale your life here as a person has a very short duration it goes well then was that it yeah then the the element of continuous frustration and discontent and the feeling there's something not right here or the feeling there's something vital missing in my life but always looking to the next thing to find the vital thing that's missing in my life i have to find it if you don't realize it's already here so you there's something i don't feel i don't feel complete there's still something lacking a sense of lack something is missing i don't know what it is you might even not verbally say that there's just a feeling that something is missing or something is not right of course not because your life is completely out of balance but you're i'm not nothing personal i'm not talking to you i'm talking general terms if you if your life were completely out of bounds you wouldn't be here or if you had accidentally stumbled upon this place you would soon

leave so the being dimension is accessed obviously in the present moment and the doing of course requires time you cannot do anything without some dimension of time make a cup of tea you need some time to make a cup of tea learn to become this or that you need time to become a doctor or to become a musician or to become a dancer or to become whatever you need time that's the time temporal dimension and yet although you need time the paradox is that you never really not really that you never never actually experience time or the passing of time except in your head as a thought as an anticipation of the next moment or memory of the last or other moments from the past that's how you experience time but the never is a direct experience time you can never experience directly because whenever you ask yourself where's time all you ever get is the present moment so on one level of your life time seems vital or to do things now on another side of that coin of time what on one hand time seems useful because you can on the level surface level of reality you can do things in time and become from being an ignorant person become a very knowledgeable person in time it takes time to acquire knowledge on that level and yet that's a good aspect of time but then there's something else aspect of time which you discover when you compare a photo of yourself taken at the age of 20 let's say you are now 40 or 50 or or whatever and you discover oh that's me 20 years ago and then you look in the mirror or 30 years ago what happened to me time who did this to me time oh my god and if you're young and beautiful or strong and healthy then you can still know that eventually time is going to erode your good looks no this is not tragic unless you're very much identified you derive your sense of identity from your physical body which might look good right now but won't in time it time will and then of course what ultimately time of course what time does it kills you so fast it enables you to do things and to become but then at the same time uh you begin to wilt like a flower it does the time does that to a flower too much more quickly than a human but very similar it does it to a fruit a piece of fruit if you want to observe the passing of time or the all you can do is to observe the effect that time has on things but you cannot observe time because it's never there it's a paradox one could go into this or make it into a huge philosophical thing which i won't do it's enough for you to see in your personal your immediate experience time is not something that you can ever experience directly it only leaves behind evidence it's been there a dead body for example or an apple that's that's that three two weeks ago was very fresh and now it's all wrinkled and has gone and two weeks before it was the apple looked and it's the same with young humans the strokes can be very radiant and then gradually now an interesting thing happens for those humans who are not totally identified with that level of form but to have access the being dimension as they grow older the being dimension as the physical vehicle gets gradually eroded by time the physical sorry the being dimension is actually able to shine through more as the body weakens and gets old there is a light the light of consciousness that can shine through and send then you find certain old people who as the body weakens the light increases of consciousness and the ego is completely gone and there's just a beautiful presence left let's see at the latest as you grow old that's still your last opportunity but if you've missed it for the first 75 years of your life because you

were too concerned with doing all the time and acquiring and becoming whether i don't know whether you can still find it i think if you fall or something like that happens to you yes you can it's preferable not to wait until you're close to death to look for the being dimension because you might not find it anymore because you're so absorbed in the doing and in time you won't even look for it if you had no interest whatsoever throughout your life in any of this it's a bit late that's fine the universe is abundant and patient and every life has a purpose we'll talk about that some other time time you see can't get away from it so as i i believe i wrote in the new earth that time is like a on the like a criminal you can never catch this criminal but the criminal always leaves evidence behind but that he he's he's been he she who knows it's he's been there and the evidence is the dead bodies so the mastery of life is to reconcile and to balance in your life being acknowledging the present moment being appreciating what's here now and going within and finding the stillness and in being engaged in doing now for meditators many meditators can access many i don't know some can access the being dimension in during their meditation so they go maybe half an hour a day or twice or half an hour and that's beautiful it does not necessarily translate into however doesn't necessarily translate into continuing to have one foot in the being dimension while you're engaged in doing so sometimes these meditators who may be good it's a wonderful thing they can have that they may still got very much drawn into that they lose themselves like everybody else in in the doing they get losing yourself in the doing means you get upset with things you get stressed you get anxious because you need to arrive there but you're not there yet to a great thing to reconcile being and doing is to make sure that you only do things that you can actually enjoy doing or at least fully accept i wrote about that somewhere too at least fully accept that at this moment this is what needs you need to do so an acceptance of whatever you are doing at this moment a full acceptance so that your attention is fully in it or actually an enjoyment of what you're doing then the excessive focus on where you want to get to is removed it does not mean the focus is removed completely you still know that you want to achieve certain things so you need to get there this is why you're doing this but the there does not take up so much of your attention that the doing of this becomes just an unpleasant thing that you want to get it get it over with already that's how many people live their whole lives they would rather be somewhere else they want to i wish i didn't have to do this but i have to get there that's why i'm doing this and then you can the bumper sticker on your car then says i'd rather be fishing golfing surfing but this i'd rather be is a mindset that many humans have which basically says i'd rather be somewhere else and doing something else and it's an unconscious mindset and that brings a unhappiness into your doing which can express itself as stress and so on anxiety being upset easily with other people who are not doing what they should be doing to help you to do what you need to do to get where you need to get to so you get because others are not you might have noticed they often do not what they're supposed to do i don't know why that is why don't they they should know better and then you get upset because others are not doing what they're supposed to do and once you're upset with somebody you cannot relate to them fully as a human

being because you relate to them as somebody who's not doing what they're supposed to do so it's hard to love a person or to have some human connection or empathy with somebody who is maybe their mind tells you it's not supposed what they're supposed to do now this doesn't mean you cannot ever tell anybody that they're supposed to do something or they fail to do something else if you're still connected with the being within yourself so that they can still be connected with their being and then there's still a true human interaction and while there's a there's still some there's a an underlying sense of benevolence or goodwill towards that other human being that gets obscured if your focus is exclusively on doing if you lose being the benevolence the goodwill this is the same word one is of latin origin one is of germanic origin the benevolence or goodwill which is a vital thing for you to be really fully human as already confucius in china who i only started to read recently because it was never that attracted to confucius seemed very hard to get into but then i saw there's some fundamental truths that he expresses so after being confused by confucius for many years i saw that he talks about benevolence and goodwill as one of the most fundamental characteristics of a fully evolved human being so he says we are still basically paraphrasing we are not fully human yet or many humans are not fully human yet and a sign of being fully human one of the signs of being fully human is there is in your life continuously a benevolence or a goodwill flowing towards other humans whoever you come into contact with and that's the underlying current now it does not mean that in addition to the underlying current of benevolence you cannot tell a human being what you did was wrong or you forgot to do this you should have done this so maybe next time you try that again do that you can still function on the level of form and tell them that this wasn't right you made that mistake or you can say you've already i've told you 10 times and 10 times you've made the same mistake i may have to let you go if you employ this person or you'll arrange to meet somebody at a particular place and the person doesn't turn up and then you call and say oh i've completely forgot okay let's meet the next weekend okay next week person turns up one hour late okay the next week turn doesn't turn up again so eventually you tell this person i'd rather not meet you again because i don't want to wait around just i have other things to do and so i enjoyed your company when it's there but it's not not working for me although you say these things there can still be an under current of benevolence and that is the vital thing if that's not there then you get that person becomes an enemy to you virtually so to be a fully evolved human being one of the signs is goodwill which in some traditions is called love love your neighbor as yourself but love is a misleading term because it's used in many different ways that are not love at all egoic love and so on and romantic love and the clinging love i love you which means i need you and that's egoic love in spanish of course te quiero means i love you but it also means i want you so that's egoic love then you have as i wrote in a book somewhere there's another word in spanish which is more poetic rarely used because it's rarely practiced would mean i love you but the usual one is i want you i love you because i want you and if you leave me i'll hate you and that can happen from one second to the next you love this person suddenly this person says i found somebody else i love even

more than you and then the story starts in the mind he she betrayed me plus long other words that go with that i was deceived etc etc and and that's a very satisfying story for the ego and it makes it creates a lot of suffering of course for yourself but the ego loves that kind of suffering because it can be can be so right and can make somebody else so wrong and the bare facts of the situation are he or she left she found somebody else is that it yeah is that so dreadful no not really if you are if you if the being dimension is there in your life so you're not totally focused on the on the outer and yes well there can be if if a relation relationship ends in that way there can be a period of emotional sadness that then passes because it's a little death especially if the relationship has lasted for a long several years there's a little death and then the emotional sadness is there and then it passes but what often happens the story that develops then that can become lodged in your mind for years to the rest of your life what he or she did to me and all it was that they left you so that's i'm sorry if i am removing from one or two of you a story that you have has been very important to you and i don't want to take anything away from you that you feel is actually valuable but you need to ask yourself perhaps i'm not saying let go of that story no i can't tell you what to do you have to look for yourself to see whether that story is a helpful one how it makes you feel what emotions it produces does it create happiness or unhappiness is the suffering that arises when somebody leaves you how much of that suffering or unhappiness comes from the fact that this person has left you and how much of the suffering or unhappiness comes from the continuous storytelling about it in your head and so as you as the story goes on on in your head years later he is still or she is still leaving you it's just happening right now story is still alive in the head terrible burden but that happens through unconscious thinking and that happens through a complete lack of presence and and the being dimension because without access to the being dimension here now you are dependent on the doing and on the level of form and on what forms are there around you you're not rooted in the source of life you're looking to forms of life to satisfy you possessions achievements appearance people appearance of the physical body all those things you're looking to those things to provide a sense of identity that's normal and that's the unbalanced life if you're looking to what you can do or what you have or what other people think of you what you own as a source of identity then it's frustrating so who am i is the vital question and you cannot know that that can find the true answer to who am i if you have no access to the being dimension because only from there arises your sense of beingness you have everybody has a sense of self a sense of identity for most people it's bound up with a story in the head so we just talked about short story little short stories about somebody did something to you but then there's a somewhat longer story which is your entire life history or at least those parts of it that you remember or interpret in a certain way because memories are already interpretations so you have a selection of memories in your head and those this bundle of memories is me now they're not as i said they're not really memories they are already every memory is already a way of interpreting something what happened but that becomes the me and that is not a satisfying or true sense of identity it's always something missing to that me that's why

that me needs the future to complete itself and never does the sense the completion always happens briefly and then you say oh that wasn't it need something else the next thing so we're talking i'm talking simultaneously about unbalanced living so you see it and the possibility of mastery of life fulfilling the true purpose of your life which is bringing into balance the two dimensions of being and doing or being and becoming whether you call it doing becoming and one aspect of doing and becoming is thinking so all thinking is associated with the doing or becoming dimension because all thinking is doing you're doing the thinking well in most cases it's not really that you are doing the thinking but the thinking is done to you by your mind the thinking happens to you people don't people are at the mercy of their conditioned mind whatever thoughts want to arrive in your mind they just come and there's nothing you they think there's nothing they can do about it they don't even know that these thoughts just come into their heads because they are so taken over by every thought that comes into head they are it there's not a single there's not the slightest space between the thoughts and who they are they are the thoughts so these are very unconscious humans now what the percentage of humans on this planet is who are totally unconscious which is totally identified with every arising thought i don't know it varies also i do know that it varies from place to place there are certain pockets even within one country if it's a very large country where there are certain pockets where people tend to be more conscious and others where they tend to be less conscious and there are certain parts of the world where at the moment there's a continuous violence and conflict and those tend to be the areas where there is complete identification with mental structure collective ego and so on tribal egos religious egos ideological egos collective egos complete identification with that europe what the whole world went to the face in the 20th century in the first world war in second world war happens there was a wave of deep unconsciousness because it can come in waves taking over millions of people in germany in russia the so thinking is really the foundation or really of the doing dimension so to access being you need to access the space in you where thinking subsides and that is really if i had to reduce to one to just a few words to describe how to access the being dimension i would say stop thinking without going to sleep that's another way you can stop thinking but that's not this way we're not stopping thinking by falling below thought and eventually i would fall off the chair if i fell below thought here isn't that wonderful i'm not thinking anymore ah it is but you're moving below thinking yes it frees you too from the compulsive thinking that otherwise happens continuously in your head it frees you as can a couple of whiskies but it pulls you below thought do you really want to go below thought well if you're totally miserable perhaps you say yes i would really go if you can't go above thought at least let me go below thought but you can go above thought it's not that hard it's just that you don't know that that's possible talking generally you don't know that that is possible that there is another state of consciousness in addition to dreamless sleep dreaming and wakeful state there is the state of aware presence present moment awareness in which there's no thinking just a present space shh so that goes and as this this the present space is always the same space about we're using language let me call

it spaces these spaces of aware presence need to first open up in your daily life as much as possible and that is your spiritual practice and you can start here well many of you are doing that already at some point you don't need to i say doing it's not a doing it's a relinquishment of doing but whenever you use language doing comes in so the space comes in the space of no thought doesn't matter how long five seconds ten seconds while you look at something you look at something all right now here and now as you sit here do you need to think to figure out what it is that i'm saying no you know what i'm saying you don't need to start thinking what's he really saying when he says stop thinking what do you really mean by stopping thinking i don't understand of course you don't understand because you can't understand what presence is through thinking about it so what opens up in you is a little space of aware presence like so to sometimes like to physically this symbolizes it so you're thinking thinking and then you remember aware presence for a while the thinking still happens here on the periphery and then it's ah you feel alive aliveness and then thinking comes back and then there's a next moment one conscious breath in and out and then you're working on your computer and then you're looking at a flower that's next to your computer for five seconds and then you're looking out of the window five minutes later for three seconds at the sky there's much you can't do much thinking about the sky either there are clouds or it's clear there's not much to think about so that's good you look at the sky and you can just look without thinking sky is a great thing for i'll say and again and then somebody comes into the room and starts talking to you about something and you suddenly realize you're able to listen without thinking so as you listen you go and then the person stops speaking at some point hopefully and then you need to answer something and you will find your ability to answer is still there so the thinking resumes but because you accessed the deeper dimension it is more likely that your answer will be just right for this person for this moment and be effective or come up with some effective solution whatever it is that needs to be talked about so in other words the thinking becomes more productive and powerful when you access the deeper dimension of not thinking because in the deeper image of not thinking there resides true intelligence not conceptual intelligence which is a small expression of a much vaster intelligence whatever can measured be measured through iq tests it's a very small section of fragment of intelligence tiny some people are good at it some are not but i've looked at simple iq tests and most of them i can't do so i probably my iq probably would be quite low but in the eyes of the world maybe that would be called low intelligence but there are other intelligence is much vaster than certain abilities to manipulate numbers or concepts so if it's not just that you there is a an aliveness and that comes into your life and a peace an alive peace as you access the being dimension but it also means the doing dimension becomes more intelligent when you are in touch with the being when there is that balance in your life whatever you do is now more helpful to the world and to yourself because it is no longer completely run by the ego and its needs so you become an expression in your doing of a greater intelligence so it's not just balancing the doing and the being as you balance doing and being it changes the nature of the doing so it's not it's not just that and so you become a

more effective doer and not a compulsive doer quite a bit of the doing may fall away and what remains is the essential doing if you're not in touch with the being a lot of the doing is unnecessary superfluous and quite often harmful as the doing is informed by the being then it becomes more intelligent and that includes speaking what you say to a person it includes the arising of ideas that are fresh and new it includes even yes a spontaneous insight a fresh way of looking at something all those things are there as you reconcile or bring into balance doing and being and so your spiritual practice is to as much as possible have little spaces of no thought all that remains is an enlarged presence then you will find your daily life becomes interspersed with spaces this could be compared to a sky that is when there are no spaces is totally cloudy because every cloud represents a thought and every thought leads to another thought and they're so linked together that there's no can't see the spacious blue sky behind it there's just and that's the person who's totally trapped in their self-talk in the mind and as you bring in little moments little spaces of presence the clouds there's little gaps in the clouds here and there start to happen clouds oh and then they come back and then as that becomes more second nature to you you find actually sometimes the spaces become actually larger and you might spend a certain period of time in just aware presence which may not necessarily mean that not a single thought arises but no longer these vast streams of thought occasional thoughts come in just little puffy clouds go and then they drift past and another cloud comes and you more or less you feel yourself to be the sky the vast the empty you are the empty sky and you are the space where these clouds arise but before you were the clouds and as i just said it affects also the nature of the doing it also affects being in balance it also affects the nature of your thinking one thing that occurs is that thinking which is still there loses its capacity to make you unhappy and that's an amazing thing because if you look closely you'll see that a large percentage of unhappiness in whatever form whether it comes in as grievances regrets anxiety remorse blaming whatever a lot of a large percentage of unhappiness in your life it comes not from the situation in your life but from the story that you're telling yourself about it that was already discovered by certain greek philosophers they said epictetus not very well-known philosopher said that what makes you unhappy is not the situation but your thoughts about the situation so this example i just gave a mile ago he betrayed me that thought is very unhappy makes you very unhappy because a terrible thing to betray somebody now if you simplify that story and just give the bare facts of the situation he left me okay that's a very difference it's not really a story it's simple fact or i'm ruined or or i have zero balance in my bank account one is an unhappy story and one is just the fact the world's just reflecting the fact so the thinking as you bring balance being and doing into balance tends to just reflect bare facts it's no longer some unhappy story around them so you go you shift as you bring balance being and doing not thinking and thinking it changes the nature of your thinking so he betrayed me becomes he left me i'm ruined becomes at the moment there's zero in my bank statement okay or i have that amount of dollars in my pocket okay and then you see what is anything i can do now but the story i'm ruined already prevents you from taking intelligent action it becomes a

burden and this is just one example of and could give countless examples of stories that are so heavy that they prevent you from taking intelligent action and that does not happen anymore as the your ability to access the being through not thinking little spaces of not thinking your ability to access that increases so i talked about the sky just now this is another little if you want some external reflection of what the being dimension is and this is been talked about for thousands of years in spiritual traditions you can look at the sky and here the sky continuously changes it's wonderful every few minutes there are clouds and suddenly totally blue then it totally overcast for 20 minutes and then some clouds in the blue sky continues so if you look up at the sky there's a vast space in the sky in a way the only forms that are in the sky is the clouds there's the clouds and this formless spaciousness of the sky so here you have the world of form so if you want an external representation of the formless you can look at this the sky and especially the the clear sky in where the clouds beyond the clouds there's the clear sky and you look at that and see yourself feel yourself to be the clear sky it's the reflect external reflection of an inner spaciousness and this is why both in china heavens is a term frequently used in chinese spiritual ancient spiritual books the heavens the jesus talks about the heavens the kingdom of heaven and in most language in many languages sky and heaven are the same word in french in spanish in german ciel cielo himmel sky and heaven are the same word so jesus really was saying the kingdom of the sky so why does he say the kingdom of the sky kingdom means in modern terminology the dimension so he was saying the dimension of the sky kingdom of heaven is the original translation so if we now substitute sky for heaven kingdom of dimension of the sky and what is the sky formlessness spaciousness so if we then translate even change the word sky what jesus was saying is the dimension of formlessness the formless dimension the spaciousness that's what he was talking about and that kingdom of heaven is within you and it is here and now that's what's the teaching is that do they understand that in the churches mostly not so he was talking about that dimension that dimension of consciousness that is possible for you and he was trying to put it into words that people at that time within that cultural context could understand he was trying to get them to see something to realize something and what did the buddha say when they asked him about the ultimate nature of life or existence the ultimate nature of realization well jesus said the kingdom of heaven is within you that's and buddha said um emptiness what is emptiness that stops the mind kingdom of heaven doesn't necessarily stop the mind because you can start thinking about what happens in the kingdom of heaven or what happens when i get there who will i find there who will be waiting for me there different religions have different ideas about it but when the buddha said emptiness that really stops the mind so that was perhaps the most effective pointer ever to that dimension because it denies everything in the world of form emptiness so and i'm sure when he taught at the time 2 500 years ago when he said emptiness he would look at you and as he said emptiness you could suddenly realize the emptiness emptiness spaciousness formlessness no thought so the same thing kingdom of heaven this is the dimension of spaciousness emptiness the fourth dimension of consciousness it's here and now it's and the only

reason why people don't know that is they and this is how we started today they overlook it you cannot if you try to achieve it you get lost in the doing again because it's already your innermost reality you overlook the nature of consciousness itself because the world of objects is so noisy so to speak it's so hypnotic and it's every object that arises give me attention but more than objects thoughts every thought that arises which is a mental formation which is an energy form wants to draw all your attention to itself it wants to grow it wants to have little children other thoughts it wants to produce more children it wants and for a thought to be able to produce little children which then grow into big thoughts it needs it absorbs your consciousness it's it's for more let me suggest that you look at thoughts in your mind as as little entities because in a way they are they are energy forms we don't scientists by the way if any scientist tells you that they know the nature of thought they don't scientists who have studied the brain it's only the ego in scientists that prevents them from admitting that they have no idea what a thought is what is a memory how is it that i can suddenly remember something that happened 30 years ago and i hadn't thought about since then and suddenly that memory is back where was that memory was that certain molecules in my mind that were waiting to be able to to come some back into balance we just don't know is thought matter-based let's not even go there because this is more practical so i've forgotten what i was going to say but as we started earlier when i started at the beginning say it's overlooked that's overlooking in the same way that a fish would overlook the presence of water where is it i need to achieve water no it's already here you basically are water well the fish so what is it what is overlooked is the simple fact that you are conscious and let me correct that you are consciousness the essence of who you are is consciousness and you can sense the essence of who you are at this very moment because without thinking about your past right now you can get a very clear and powerful sense of beingness right here and now and you know that without any doubt you are conscious and you are consciousness here and now then that is your identity your sense of i who am i is a question that is sometimes used in as a meditation subject ask yourself ramana maharshi in india who lived in the 20th century first half mainly of the 20th century recommended that when you meditate you ask yourself the question who am i but you cannot find the answer by thinking about it so who am i is a pointer to finding that which had been continuously overlooked and that point is who am i now what is the answer if the answer is not a thought if the answer is not found in the realm of thinking who am i after you ask the question there's a space and that's the answer ah so what then happens the being dimension is present in your life continuously in the background and sometimes in the foreground it's in the foreground if thinking completely stops and you just you might even close your eyes and be completely just as what's left is just a sense of being as our presence and then you open again and then thinking starts and the awareness of being recedes somewhat into the background and then you can now this is the real mastery where even while you think you can still feel the spaciousness behind the thinking and in between the thoughts that is the fulfillment of your of your destiny and if you can live your life like that and you can then whatever you do in your life the other dimension of

your purpose your life purpose will be wonderful and fruitful because it will flow from that dimension of connectedness with being and what you do what you will no longer create suffering for yourself and others what you do in fact will no longer be karmic it comes from a deeper level it's not karmic action anymore there can be action that is not karmic and that flows from it's that deeper benevolence towards others so it's a wonderful thing to be practicing thoughtlessness thoughtless is a negative term in conventional usage but we use it in a different way here it means presence so this is what we practice here as you sit here of course and as you in between our sessions and while you do your movement sessions with kim but very helpful is to realize that the doing which is movement and the being don't need to be separate and that's a way of practicing bringing the doing and being together and that can start with physical movement and then whenever you are not totally focused on the goal that you want to achieve once unless your attention is in the doing in fact there's more attention in the doing than there is in the mental mentally projected goal you still have a goal a life goal let's say you want to become a writer my goal is to become a writer okay that's fine so how do you achieve your goal of becoming a writer well the main thing is yes you have to start reading some books if you haven't if that helps and then the next thing is to write anybody wants to become a writer so let's presume that you have already read quite a few books otherwise if you love books and writing the next step is you need to write now if you are excessively focused on becoming a writer or producing books or even becoming well known as a writer or all those things then your fullest attention will not be on the writing and your enjoyment of it if there's any enjoyment at all will become diminished because you want to arrive there there's always some attention is taken away by this goal but if you have the goal and yet you give your fullest attention while the goal some of your attention yes is on the goal but most of it is on the act of writing which you can actually enjoy then you enjoy the writing you might not enjoy it all the time because every writer occasionally has writer's blocks so then you just have to wait and left and sometimes or just pick up the pen well i i write with a pen but most people these days don't they have a computer enjoy what you're doing even if you never get published you enjoyed and you're enjoying the writing what's wrong with that and if you are enjoying the writing the possibility that somebody will enjoy reading your writing is greater the possibility that people will enjoy reading it so and so whatever it is you might have a course of study i want to become this or that yes but are you enjoying this moment while you are studying if not there's something not right and you lose yourself in doing so always make sure that there's an enjoyment of the present moment of whatever you're doing in the present moment if you can enjoy what you're doing in the present moment then the being dimension is present in the doing and if you absolutely cannot enjoy it for certain things that you may have to do this moment demands that you do that at least you can accept this moment fully that you accept that you have to do that at this moment and then also the being dimension is still present and when the being dimension is present there's a piece in the background of the doing that's the sign that the being dimension is present when you get completely upset with external doings

then the being dimension is not present when there's a piece in the background the likelihood also that you're doing will be effective and lead to quick and effective results is much greater and that's slightly miraculous almost so when the then all the negativities that otherwise are associated with doing when you're not connected with being if they fall away there's just clear doing this either enjoyment of what you're doing or there is an acceptance of what you have to do right now but there's never there's not anymore that entity that complains incessantly about what it's doing but doesn't want to be doing it and as I've quoted before Ramana Maharshi the spiritual teacher from India who lived in the 20th century first part of the 20th century wonderful teacher when he was asked how do we know whether somebody asked him how do I know whether I'm making progress on the spiritual path how do I know that well if he could have said of course a Zen teacher might have said there is no progress on the spiritual path for example uh or he might have said let go of your idea of progress on the spiritual path it's all nonsense maybe a Zen teacher might have said that but Ramana Maharshi said oh yeah that's it's easy you can know how you're making progress on the spiritual path how well the degree of absence of thinking is the criterion or the measure for progress on the spiritual path that's what he said the degree of absence of thinking or thoughts is the measure of progress on the spiritual path and he was not talking about falling below thought no he was talking about rising above thought if you fall below thought you become a fool as it's traditionally called and if you rise above thought you become a sage but the fool and the sage have certain things in common they are both connected to being more than the ordinary man or woman and that's why in ancient mythology the fool is an important figure even in lord of the rings where the hobbit is a little bit of a fool but he is the only one who can do the great job not the more evolved people so the fool and the sage and sometimes they are mistaken too you can mistake the sage for a fool and you can mistake the fool for a sage a lovely movie that's quite old now that where a fool is mistaken for a sage is with peter sellers it's an old movie and it's called being there being there whereas there's a man who lives below thought but people think he's so evolved that he's he's a sage and it's happened in the past that certain spiritual teachers were not recognized and taken to be fools that's not uncommon so sufi masters some zen teachers another one of course as i mentioned before where the fool is the fool is more than a fool is forrest gump that movie where forrest gump is below thought has no ego and yet he's so connected that life all always brings to him what he needs and he does good without claiming any ownership or so he does he does heroic things in the war but never even realizes that he did on something heroic in the war he's not evolved enough to have an ego and so that's a lovely another lovely illustration of fool and sage it's having certain similarities now this does not we are not going back to the fool stage so as you know we will have many opportunities for asking questions and so on either today or tomorrow or the day after or the day after that or the day after that it's all the present moment anyway so in the meantime your practice is gaps of no thought being the presence rather than being the person so welcome or perhaps i should thank you for welcoming me since about 75 percent of you are from australia so thank you for

welcoming me myself and kim and the whole team back here and it's been maybe six years since we were here at the at this very place the last time it had a different name then and since then there have been many improvements here the most notable one the addition of dinosaurs i knew six years ago that there was something missing here but i wasn't sure what it was so this is a retreat you've been taken out of your usual surroundings and put here for some of you who have come from more distant places this is a very exotic environment tropical with wonderfully exotic birds and animals and kangaroos and australian gigantic lizards and all kinds of wonderful things and trees that if you're not familiar with this part of the world that you've never seen before so all this is wonderful and helpful it can be a helpful thing to be in unusual surroundings because it's easier to be more present in unusual surroundings that's the advantage of traveling and that's why as i've written somewhere uh many people feel more alive when they travel and when they are at home their surroundings are so familiar that they lose presence completely they don't see things anymore they go from where they live to their office or wherever it is gone done it so many times they don't see it anymore and you would be surprised even at home your usual surroundings you might have a painting on your walls and haven't looked at it in the past three years might be very beautiful or your garden or the plants in there so this is the familiarity can lead to a kind of semi sleep-like state and when you're traveling you go oh and you the good thing is you might not even have a name for all the new things you see at home you know what everything is called but here you see things you might see a weird animal the mind stops because you can't name it and that's a wonderful thing or you see it trees that you haven't seen before and you go ah or you might say to your friend look at that and you might notice in the moment of looking at that you're not naming it in your mind because you don't know what it's called so there's a moment a few seconds of just being present just being the presence rather than the naming person and so let's hope you're here we're here for a few days let's hope that by the last day this place will not have become so familiar to you that you're not looking anymore so it helps to be wide awake to your sense perceptions because that is one way of coming into the present moment which is why we are here because there is more to the present moment than we realize most of the time there's more to it it's the access point to the deeper dimension within yourself so as a general theme underlying theme for our retreat i recommend surprisingly that you practice being in the present moment so we have this helpful thing that you are in unusual surroundings unless you live just a few miles from here then it may be a harder job or you might even live next door however although you've been taken out of your usual surroundings you have carried with you something else and of course that's your mind that travels with you wherever you go that is perhaps the meaning of the book that somebody wrote i believe the title is wherever you go there you are so wherever you go you carry your mind and the conditioning of your mind with you so that is the challenge here on our retreat to transcend the conditioning of your mind the habitual way of interpreting the habitual way of reacting to things habitual mind patterns if a mind pattern in you is that you frequently and very quickly become discontent with where you

are if that's a pattern in you then that pattern will arise here also if your mind pattern is one that loves complaining and finding fault with things then it's very likely that very quickly this mind pattern will appear here also despite the fact that you are in these wonderful unusual surroundings the first thing you might complain about is the dinosaurs and the mind says i'd rather see a big buddha or something like that or the mind says we've come here on a spiritual retreat isn't there supposed to be a buddha somewhere so you get surprising things things that your expectations are not met in various ways and that is a challenge to the mind to the conditioned mind because the conditioned mind wants its expectations met and if they're not met it gets uneasy restless irritated angry starts talking about what's wrong either silently in your mind or to others and if others can agree with you then it's even better or you can go on the internet and then you get 1 000 people agreeing with you so you always find those in some of you but maybe one or two of you that have that complain pattern i'm not saying if there's something really wrong you shouldn't do something to rectify it so if if something is leaking in your room you say no i'm not going to say anything because you're not supposed to complain no of course you go to reception say there's something there that needs to be rectified it's not a complaint it's just information complaint means there is an emotion behind it and the emotion says this should not be happening then it becomes a complaint or it's your fault then it becomes a complaint if it's simply presenting information it's not a complaint it's just a fact and then the question is is can anything be done about it if yes good or if they say there's nothing we can do do you go on insisting that this is very bad and create suffering for yourself or do you simply then accept this is what is and there is no situation ever including at a retreat in a wonderful almost perfect place except for the dinosaurs for some of you almost perfect place as far as the natural environment is concerned it's you can't imagine anything more the profusion of of vegetation and aliveness that surrounds you you cannot imagine anything more wonderful and yet it's not perfect and not just because of the dinosaurs there will be other things too that are not perfect you cannot find a place where you go everything is just so perfect it doesn't exist if it did exist you would become incredibly unbearably bored with saying it's so perfect what am i going to do now but of course you're lucky there is no such place so there's always something that goes wrong and that's a wonderful thing you can not only anywhere as you might know in life i believe i'm not the only person who can say that since i was born life has been challenging ever since then and very rarely do you get a little bit of moment of freedom from challenges and then suddenly something drops behind you or falls on your head metaphorically speaking so something you can practice here is to have an expectation that things should should be in a certain way and nothing should go wrong and that reality external reality should conform to exactly the expectations of the conditioned mind that creates ultimately unhappiness because a lot of the time reality does not conform to the expectations of your mind in some ways it does in other ways it doesn't and not only in a retreat but also daily life as you might have noticed one damn thing after another one damn thing after another and then the mind says i can't take anymore of course that's just another

thought completely untrue you can take anything if you drop the thought this is what is so you practice here letting go of the expectations of your mind and live in alignment with what is internal alignment with what is rather than demanding that something should be otherwise the exception is conveying information so that something can be changed if it can be changed that's understood or doing it yourself clean it up do this do that that's fine but other than that see if here make it your spiritual practice to live in alignment with the isness of the present moment and honor the present moment and bring a kind of appreciation to the present moment appreciate while you're here appreciate whatever the present moment presents to you another word for it is you welcome the present moment and that's not this is actually a relatively easy place to do that it's not one nothing is perfect we know that but this is a you're in a protected setting and it's relatively easy here to welcome the present moment it might be easier here than to be at a crowded airport and the flights have been canceled or to be stuck anywhere or to be in the hospital then things big things small things happen wherever you go welcoming the present moment is the practice that gives you access to the spiritual dimension to that which is beyond the person in yourself it seems too simple almost but let that be your practice here you may remember i mentioned it once or twice before there was a zen teacher and a disciple came to him and said i'm going away now on a journey for several years and since i haven't made it i've been in this monastery for five years and i still haven't got it can you give me some practice for my journey and the zen master said okay here's your spiritual practice for your journey come back in five years and let me know how it how it went wherever you are whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you are with whatever happens say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever is that it one imagines spiritual practice some complicated meditation method that takes years to master but no he said make it your spiritual practice to say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever no matter what happens so if you miss whether you catch the bus or you miss the bus you catch the bus say thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever you miss the bus thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever you're in a in a lovely hotel room in a warm bed thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever or you're out in the cold with nowhere to sleep oh then it not only gets more challenging to say that but if you say it and you mean it saying it is just words but if you say it and mean it when instead of being in a luxury hotel you find yourself penniless in the street if you then say it and mean it that will take you much deeper than being in a luxury hotel bed and saying thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever that's relatively easy although you might say the pillow is not quite the way i wanted but it is it's relatively easy to say but say it where it's when you're out in the out in the cold and you can't get a hotel because you don't have the money or whatever yours there are no hotels nowhere to sleep cold wet thanks for everything thanks thanks that's a sarcastic thank you thanks god it's just what i needed that's not the thanks that's not it it's if you say thanks which means a total acceptance of this moment not a total acceptance of the okay i might as well accept it for the rest of tonight i'm going to be out in the cold you don't know maybe a

minute from now something will happen and you'll find somewhere or somebody will offer you a place to sleep it's just this moment thanks for everything which is thanks for this moment so and thanks really here means a complete acceptance of this moment and if you accept a moment that seems difficult to accept that takes you much deeper than accepting a moment that's easy to accept if you have a nice meal you have a here you're drinking a cocktail and then you've ordered the starter which is whatever let's say oysters half of what if some people love them some don't but it's that's a general thing that people think oh that's okay and they can thanks for these oysters thanks for everything i have no complaint whatsoever thanks for everything and then you go home and suddenly you feel sick in your stomach so when you were eating the oyster you had thanks for everything i have no complaint right but what about now because you ate too many oysters so it's bringing your inner self into alignment with the present moment a very powerful spiritual practice why is it so powerful especially when it's when the situation is challenging and you still say it and you mean it because everything that sustains the person the exclusively personal sense of self in that act of complete surrender to what is the personal sense of self gives way to a deeper transcendent sense of self which the buddhists call no self a deeper consciousness suddenly shines through though really it's a kind of denying your form identity it doesn't mean you don't have it anymore but you are no longer trapped exclusively in your form identity the form identity is strengthened the more you can be in opposition to what is the stronger your form identity me the person the me the more you are in opposition to what is the stronger the the me becomes your form identity and if you can have enemies lots of enemies it loves that gets even stronger they all against me or us make if it's a collective ego the collective ego loves its enemies can't actually survive without them every collector even needs the others who are not us this is us and that's the others so that's the the wonderful thing that the person the exclusively personal sense of self becomes weakened subsides and another something else emerges when you're no longer habitually oppose what is something emerges that is deeper than the personal sense of self the transcendent dimension presence whatever we want to call it some people call it your higher self or you could call it your deeper self words doesn't matter but something emerges that is from beyond the person and that is a place of great power and aliveness and possibility and that is where you are connected with a vastness and with everybody else too so it's when you feel when you when that transcendent dimension arises you feel a greater sense of connectedness no longer the separation with not only with nature but also with other humans you no longer feel the otherness of the other it's just yourself in another disguise that's really becomes your experience whoever you meet there's yourself in another disguise isn't that a wonderful way of being with other humans that essentially you can sense not only your connectedness but you can also sense your inherent oneness with others so that is why this presence practice honoring the present moment welcoming the isness that's why that's so such a powerful practice so here we it is helpful to be here because it's a bit like a gym here in the gym you practice you can run on a treadmill lift weights eventually you're strong enough and then you go outside

and do whatever you have to do so this is a spiritual gym and it's easier here not only because these humans here have come together with this common purpose of transcending the merely personal even though you might not have put it like that when you came here so it helps to be engaged in this with others don't become dependent on others no but in here in this environment a protected setting where you can practice that new way of being in the world this new way of living that is what the ancient sages have pointed to using different words for thousands of years it's all they've said it not many people got it but now more people are getting it for the first time more than just a few and that's wonderful and that's why you're here don't believe that our sessions are the main thing and the rest is just waiting for the next session no then you would be wasting a valuable opportunity the retreat is every moment you are here is the retreat is not just our sessions here every moment you should incorporate into your presence practice so walking from here back to your room brushing your teeth wherever you are whatever you do be present that's your spiritual practice be aligned with the present moment rather than carry in your head this huge amount of mental content about your past and your future because the mind is primarily concerned with past and future so while you're walking here you're already thinking about in a week's time i'll be home again and then what then i'll have to do that and have those four calls to make and then i'll have to do that then those problems will be i shouldn't have come here because i've got so much on my plate at home why did i come here i should have dealt with my things there i should have waited gone to next year's retreat i said that's the self-talk in the head you will may encounter it here too as you walk from here to there you will encounter the self-talk in the head so how do you get out of the self-talk in the head one you need to know that that's self-talk in the head if you don't know it's self-talk in the head you become the self-talk in your head you become the voice in your head you don't know it you are it so you have to take the vital step and i cannot tell you how to do that and that minimum of awareness needs to be there where you know that there's self-talk happening in my head and it's telling you some kind of story it could be the briefest of stories like i shouldn't have come here or i don't fit in here all these people are too spiritual for me or i'm so spiritual these people are not spiritual at all it's all little stories in the head every every even every fragment of self-talk is a little story in the head that goes around and then you look at reality through the lens of the little story it's not just one story of course it comes another one and another and in some little some stories are not little they may be big stories about yourself and your life and what's gone wrong with it or what's gone right with it so even that's a story more pleasant than if it's gone wrong so you need to know when the self self-talk happens in the head the knowing is not part of the self-talk the knowing is just an awareness that there is self-talk the moment there is an awareness that there is self-talk the possibility of freedom from the self-talk opens up if that awareness is not there there's nothing you can do you have to wait until life knocks you over the head so that finally some awareness comes in and you go so you might have to sleep on a banana skin or something because you're self-taught and suddenly you go oh life told you to wake up and awakening which is a term

that's been used for thousands of years in the spiritual context not in the conventional context to awaken means to come out of sleep in conventional language terminology but in spiritual terminology to wake to awaken means to awaken one could say basically to awaken out of the self-talk in the head because the self-talk in the head is a form of hypnosis self-hypnosis you are hypnotized have been hypnotized by society your surroundings the surrounding culture you the even the language that you were taught to use that becomes a large part of the self-talk although some of the self-talk is also accompanied by images but a lot of it is language and all that you've been conditioned and this is you are possessed by that which is an energy formation and humans are possessed by that and mistake that conditioned entity which consists of thoughts they're so trapped in it they're so identified with it they believe in every thought that comes into your head it's absurd but normal well another word rather than absurd i could say it's mad but it's normal it creates incredible amount of suffering unnecessary suffering that humans create for themselves and for others you can't create suffering for yourself without making others suffer who are close to you and whoever comes into contact with you an enormous amount of suffering is created by not realizing that large percentage of your problems consist of self-talk in the head that's amazing and and once you see that you say okay and then you can have a little bit of awareness and say who am i am i that story or am i the one who sees that who recognizes that there's self-talk and in order to recognize that there's self-talk going on in you that's not a thought there's just an aware presence that and then the compulsive nature of self-talk lessens somewhat because some awareness has come in the light of awareness has come in and then you realize you are that light of awareness you are the awareness and there's a shift the the you the head may not immediately stop it'll want to carry on the self-talk wants to carry on there's a momentum to it you you can observe that momentum if you can't do it in yourself you can observe it in others once they have a story and they're telling you their story they can't stop they want to go on they don't and they and they don't want an end if they're talking about their problems they don't want an end to their problems they want a continuation of the story which is the problem they don't know that that's why we call it unconscious they don't know that their primary thing is they want the continuation of the story because that's the continuation of the fictitious person that cannot live without its story its storyline and so do so those people do they want an end to their problems of course they will probably tell you yeah i'd love no they don't they don't want an end to their problems because that would be an end to their story which is their identity they don't want an end to their sense of identity i need my story all the things that my i've been telling myself in my mind about myself and other people and my parents and my relatives and my co-workers and my ex-wife and my ex-husband and what people did to me and on what or what i did and shouldn't have done or failed to do who am i without i can't let go of that i need to think about this more so it becomes a habitual place the habitual place of the of the mental noise where you feel that's me and so every therapist knows that you always reach a point with your clients patients whatever depending on the school of therapy depends whatever you call your clients

your patients whatever there comes a point when you hit that resistance they don't want to be free of their problems and that the big challenge is there is this person going to overcome that barrier because that barrier is not just becoming free of my problems but also becoming free of a very limited and ultimately fictitious sense of identity the me so that is what i've described is the next step one could say in the evolution of human consciousness is stepping out of self-talk which is the conditioned mind and realizing there is much more to who i am than this conditioned content of my mind and that is the beginning of awakening it's not it's not those words not not that you need to believe that there is much more to who i am than the self-talk in my head because that is still self-talk in the head i believe there's more to who i am and you better believe it too no that that needs to be and most of you are here because you already have had or not only had a glimpse many of you have already deeply been able to transcend the person because the person the exclusive personal sense of self wouldn't want to be here it would feel threatened by being sitting here it either would feel threatened or it would feel extremely restless and irritated i need to get out of here or suddenly your legs start twitching this is quite normal by the way many humans have twitching in their legs all the time or they go so if there's somebody here who is going like this when you you know their person the the personal self what is becoming uncomfortable with being here doesn't know it but goes stretching and that kind of twitching is very normal for humans but if it happened to your dog would take you would take your dog to the vet there's nothing if if you have been twitching and now suddenly you stop that's good so you've realized because a lot of that is unconscious and suddenly it's oh if you make it conscious it stops and if you really make the self-talk conscious it also stops and suddenly you go and your attention is suddenly in the present moment the self-talk is never in the present moment and suddenly your attention is in the present moment and you go and the whole person at that right now is not there anymore when you go you're not a person at that moment anymore you are an aware presence so that that shift in consciousness can happen very easily whether it stays with you for a few seconds or a few minutes or an hour or a day or longer doesn't matter that much the important thing is that it arises it arises and suddenly the unhappy self-talk entity is disappearing and what has taken its place just a sense of presence and that sense of presence is first of all aware of sense perceptions so you look more consciously you listen more consciously and this is a wonderful environment here for looking and listening because there's so much to look at and so much to listen to and it's not only looking and listening it's also feeling the breeze on your skin the air especially if you come from northern parts of our planet where it's beginning of winter and suddenly you come here and you feel the warmth of the air and and you there might be a scent in the air because there's so many plants and you become conscious of that but feeling the air the movement of air on your skin requires a considerable degree of awareness a person who is immersed in the self-talk in the head they cannot feel this light the breeze touching their skin they can't feel that it's a very subtle thing and to to feel subtle things you need to have that awareness aware presence that alert aware presence you cannot be immersed in the self-talk to

really honor and appreciate deeply the present moment which is life we could call it we could say honor appreciate deeply life because present moment and life are synonymous there is no life away from the present moment if you cannot appreciate the present moment means you are away from life instead of life you have a substitute in your head just abstractions in the form of thoughts so to notice the breeze on their skin you need to be quite alert and basically still inside and then you can see and to notice big things requires less awareness than to notice small things so if there's a big if there's a kangaroo jumping right in front of you which may happen it's a wonderful thing of course there of course it's easy to for that moment to be present especially if you're not familiar with them and for a moment even if you were immersed in the self-talk in the head for a moment you're free of that as the kangaroo is jumping for the moment the unhappy person is subsided but then the kangaroo is gone and then there's nothing big to attract your attention and then your attention is reabsorbed again by thinking until the next kangaroo comes but after a few kangaroos you become so familiar with kangaroos that even a jumping kangaroo is not going to get you out of your self-talk anymore but to be to notice little things like a little beetle crawling there or a very subtle noise you need more awareness so it's very important as you are here in our retreat place don't just look for the big things because while you're looking for the kangaroo you might be missing many other things in the meantime pay attention to the little things a quivering leaf on a tree and for a moment you give it attention it's all miraculous it's a miraculous expression of life and the multiplicity of the profusion of life in millions of life forms on this planet life expressing itself and to go through life ignoring the miraculous nature of life is a terrible pity terrible to have to miss that rather than to love it of course that's the sense-perceived life there is deeper life too that is not sense-perceived but we start with the sense-perceived life and as we go deeper deeper during our retreat we will see that the sense-perceived life although beautiful is only the surface of reality but you have to start with that and it's beautiful and if you give it your fullest attention even then you already begin to go deeper than the surface because then you sense an aliveness in everything you can sense that the life in this flower i'm just making sure it's not plastic even if it were plastic there is some life in plastic too but not as intense life as in the natural flower the life that is expressive that expresses itself through this flower is the life that expresses itself through this form this body this mind and millions of other other forms and so you go around in a state of astonishment because there's so much that you had not really acknowledged before it's easier to be astonished here at the multiplicity of life perhaps than if you were in what's a boring place well there are many boring places i'm not going to name any it's easier but even if you're in a so-called boring place a suburb somewhere there's beauty there too you might have to look more and even if you were in a street without any vegetation there will still be beauty there too and there comes a moment when you actually see beauty in everything even in a simple pavement or a window the surface of a table how light gets reflected of objects the colors and when for i also suggest so look for be aware of the little things because that requires that brings your alertness up big things are fine that's nice to be aware of the little things and

go go when you walk around here in between sessions you go a bit like a little bit like as if you had as if you had just arrived on this planet in some sense you have because the surroundings here may be so unusual to you if you live somewhere very different it's almost as if you had arrived on a new planet and how would you be if you arrived on a new planet you don't you go and you don't you don't do a lot of thinking you just you're just there as an aware presence perceiving like a child before a child learns the names of things but you're not regressing you're transcending that level of conceptualization that which most that most humans are trapped in you're not regressing to the child stage you are transcending but as you transcend the conceptualization level there is there certain things that are similar to a child or that's deeper than the child perceives because you've been through that growth you have transcended conceptualization there's a deeper knowing that the child does not have but in other ways there are certain similarities with how a child perceives the world and it's not for nothing that Jesus said truly i tell you if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you must be like a little child that's a very important pointer and how is a little child before the child can name things when a child does not happen to be crying the child is going he takes everything in without naming it and there's a clarity of perception and then the naming stage comes and then the problems start another thing need to mention for to be aware of here i highly recommend that you do not switch on your television if you have one in your room and if you find that difficult it means you're addicted and so if you find yourself going to the tv or the remote and you go i can't swap myself oh that's a good way of realizing that you're addicted and even more addictive these days are the little gadgets well from laptops to to pads ipads and similar devices phones which are much more than phones these days which absorb many people's attention a lot of the time so much that for many humans their interaction with reality 50 percent or more of their interaction with reality is through a little screen that they hold in front of their eyes and they live for it they live for the next facebook post so you may find that you are addicted to some extent to that also i would recommend to keep to a minimum the devices if you absolutely have to set aside 10 minutes 15 minutes a day when you actually do interact or you look at your emails or facebook posts just to see what other people are eating or what they're wearing and you can say oh that looks great or you may compulsively take a selfie of yourself here look where i am and then hopefully everybody will feel jealous about you we may talk about those things a little bit more at a later time but in the meantime i would recommend that you break the habitual if for many of you what is habitual interaction with these devices while you're here in order to fully benefit from being here so that your attention is not absorbed by that because that really amplifies the mind unless you have something that you're looking there that promotes presence you might see a present moment reminder oh i have to remember to put in a present moment reminder it needs to come up on the screen says put away your phone we'll have to write that down for the next one stop looking at the screen look at the sky oh what else oh alcohol i believe you can buy alcohol here and there's nothing wrong with a glass of wine or beer occasionally but at least how i see it but it can easily pull you out of

presence into unconsciousness especially if after one glass of wine you cannot stop if you feel you need one glass wine to enjoy your meal fine fine but if you're one of those many you cannot after one they need to have a second because and then they don't realize that before but when they started drinking their one first glass of wine they were totally determined determined only to have one glass of wine but by the end they get by the time they get to the end of the first glass of wine they forgot that they were totally determined to only have one glass of wine say oh i might as well have another and then you're gone so if you are one of those don't don't have the first one or beer if you cannot enjoy the meal without a beer you must have your beer before the meal okay but if you if you cannot stop you must have another one after that this is not this is would prevent you from benefiting from being here if you can avoid alcohol altogether it would be preferable while you're here so that is only there no this is not a boot camp retreat there are spreadsheets like that where you get strict instructions no alcohol you're not watching television you're not going to talk to anybody you're not going to look at anybody and we're going to meditate for 10 hours a day some of you may have been on that retreat now sit and close your eyes there's a place for that kind of retreat too if it's right for you if it's right for you you've already been to it or you're going to go to it so i'm not mentioning other drugs because i don't think i need to here i don't think you will indulge in those things here there's something much better than acid or pot and that's called presence it's not a drug it's true that some of these drugs can give you a little glimpse of of what it is to perceive the world without the intrusion of the habitual mind and this is why people who take some of these drugs have an experience that goes a wow experience and you look at something you look at a simple object and suddenly see its beauty and aliveness and you go wow wow look at that look at that glass of water i can't believe it and the truth is it is miraculous and the truth is we don't see it because of the habitual nature of the mind if you if you suspend thinking and look at this glass of water water is an amazing substance it's a miracle and what is a glass it's a solid thing and the light shines through it it's amazing it's completely solid but the light travels through it and yes you can go wow without any drug if you're real if you're present really present so and you again do this occasionally you can do it here people won't think you're mad if you do it out in the world they would think oh he must have taken something or she but if you go to really appreciate an object any object a natural object or even a man-made object pick it up give it your fullest attention feel it see it and then after a little while you can sense something else something that takes you beyond the sense perception a little bit first of all you you've sent you see it you give it fullest attention you feel it you might smell it or taste it and then as the mind becomes quite still you can sense there is a presence in that object let's say this for example there is a certain that there's a certain presence it has every object also has a presence that transcends the sense perception so you feel the presence of that thing as some artists did and then they were able to paint it this is why some artists painted extremely simple objects or some artists of impressionists for example painted landscapes that nobody would have looked at twice not remarkable landscapes ordinary landscapes and they

became great works of art because those artists were able to look at an ordinary landscape through these unconditioned eyes unconditioned ways of perceiving they actually went and they saw something extraordinary in the ordinary and then they were able to paint and give expression something that nobody can define but many humans can sense that there is something there that they cannot define when they look at that painting and the painting is not of anything extraordinary it might be a simple landscape or like van Gogh an old chair nobody would look at this chair twice but that was a chair in his room and he looked at it and he went oh and he saw something extraordinary in the ordinary and then he was able to convey that and put it on canvas so some of the realization of those artists of seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary God is reflected still in what they produced and this is why we call it a great work of art the miraculous thing is that many humans can actually recognize there's something there that is great but they can't say what it is they can sense it so there's a there's a general agreement that these are great works of art I think the prices they pay for these things is absurd of course these days you can if you can have a painting like that that costs 50 million dollars so a person buys this painting for 50 million dollars and they never look when they go out they don't look at the landscapes that they look at their painting and say this is mine it's worth 50 million dollars the painting is supposed to show you how to look and see the extraordinary in the ordinary so instead of you don't have to spend 50 million dollars go out into a walk and there it is and it's not necessary to create a work of art unless you feel compelled or something arises from within you and then you produce something that could happen but the work of art is your your life is the work of art what becomes your reality is the work of art that's our so that is a little summary that was of our retreat here of how to be here oh yes one more thing I think it's one maybe more uh some of you may want to be in silence I don't know yet usually we have some tables reserved I don't know if that's going to work here for people who don't want to engage in social interactions and that's fine that's good others may prefer to engage in social